

- Horticulture Report
- Hybridizing Bearded Irises
- Judges Training
- Photography Program



Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin



Next Scheduled Meeting:

Tuesday, February 9, 2016
GATE CLOSSES AT 6:30 P.M.
Meeting begins at 7 P.M.
Pot Luck Dinerr

Tuesday, March 8, 2016 – Meeting
Saturday, April 9 – IRIS SHOW
Tuesday, April 12 – Meeting
Tuesday, May 10 – Meeting
INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

Zilker Upcoming Events:

Saturday and Sunday, April 2 and 3 –
ZILKER GARDEN FESTIVAL

HORTICULTURE REPORT

by Nelda Moore

In the new garden in Zilker Botanical Gardens five irises were in bloom or in bud Sunday, January 24. 'Matrix' apparently was the first to open and it was ready for the last bloom while the two at the top looked like a huge flattie from the distance. I started to remove dead leaves until I spotted names still visible written on them.

The garden beside it has some weeds such as henbit, horse herb, clover, chickweed, and grasses just like my garden at home. The compost has covered much and really adds to the beauty of the garden.

Although the rain that has been predicted to fall here did not materialize, the beds are still wet. I have tried to accomplish so much, but weeding is a slow and careful process around irises. Nevertheless, remove the dead foliage, check the name tags, and feed the bearded irises with bone meal or Hasta Grow. Always check the Louisianas each week that it does not rain and add some water. The rhizomes do not have to stand in water, but they do need attention concerning moisture or wetness so that they will bloom. The cedar mulch over the rhizomes have helped to keep them moist and has protected them from the few freezes we have had. Never let the Louisianas dry out.

Feed Louisiana irises with an acid fertilizer such as azalea food or purchase acid soil. The Spuria irises that grow so tall need rose food at least three times a year since they are heavy feeders like Louisiana irises.

If you can not tell a Louisiana from a Spuria then hold a leaf of a Louisiana iris to the light and check for the good little black dots, resembling black pepper. The Spuria irises have thin leaves that are long, but the leaves surely look good in a flower arrangement because you can do so much with them.

Enjoy removing the weeds so that you can enjoy the heavenly flowers.

AIS REGION 17

BASKET ITEMS NEEDED

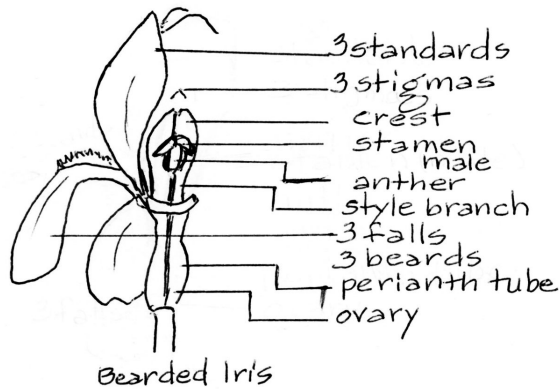
Please bring any local iris item for the Region 17 Basket that will be sent to Debra Strauss, who will be taking it to the convention in New Jersey.

These are the items thus far: Texas Dish Towel from Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Mug with Mrs. Johnson's signature — "Where flowers bloom, so does hope." Texas Bluebonnet haiku from Spicewood, Utopia Comfort Candle (two cities in Texas, but this is from Comfort), Spiced Mug Mat, Texas Shaped Cookie Cutter from Sugar Land, and Iris Picture.

“Remember the old saying, ‘Behind every successful man is a woman’? May I suggest an iris-themed

corollary? ‘Behind every successful iris hybridizer is a big compost pile.’ ” — Keith Keppel on Facebook
 (See picture on page 4.)

HYBRIDIZING BEARDED IRISES



Without counting chromosomes (genes) or without use of colchicine that can double the number of chromosomes, one can sometimes create a new iris. Keep in mind, however, that there are thousands of cultivars that are registered so select irises that have great attributes.

Records and Correct Plant Names Are Essential

Record keeping and labeling irises properly are essential. Identify the parent plant and the specific cross in your book and label or attach a tag to the stalk just below the ovary of the pollinated flower, giving the date of the cross. Write the name of the pod parent FIRST, followed by an "x" and then the pollen parent.

Collecting Pollen

As a breeder take pollen from the pollen parent early in the morning and place it on the stigma of the pod parent. The pollen grains are ripe and most viable at the time the anthers split open. The pollen looks fluffy, and this happens some three to four hours after the flower opens. The stigma is moist and untouched. To collect from the pod flower, clip the anthers from the stamens of the pollen parent and dab them onto all 3 stigmas of the pod parent. The pollen grains will stick to the stigma surfaces. With tweezers insert



the anthers pollen side up in a small plastic container. Then wash and wipe the tweezers. Remember to mark each container with the variety name. Each pollen grain "contains 2 sperm nuclei which travel down the pollen tube and are released into the ovule, where one nucleus unites with another to form the zygote that will become the embryonic plant. The second nucleus from the male plant unites with one or 2 nuclei to form the cell mass called endosperm, the nutrients to develop seed."

Saving Pollen

Store pollen in the refrigerator at 35 -38 degrees F for keeping for about 6 weeks.

Clip the Falls

Clip the falls of the pod parent immediately so that insects will not have a landing platform. Cage the plant with an insect-proof cover or bag the flower with a tightly woven cloth. After pollinating the female parent, bag the flower again. To protect it from hazards like dogs and kids, stake the stalk.

Seeds Develop

In 7 - 10 days the ovary swells and forms a green seedpod that turns tan to brown in about 60 -80 days. The seeds are ripe when the top of the seedpod begins to crack and split into triangular sections to show the seeds within. Usually there are about 75 seeds that can be kept in a small bag in a cool, dry place.



Planting Seeds

Plant the dried seeds that look healthy in the fall close together one inch deep in rows 4 inches apart. Cover and firm or tamp the soil. Keep the ground moist, but not wet. The seeds have built-in germination inhibitors that slow growth until the right conditions prevail. Label the rows and grow them for 2 years before transplanting them to a sunny location when they are 1- 2 inches tall. Grow and use a weak fertilizer. Then judge for flower color, form, proportion, stalk branching, and fragrance or odor before destroying any seedlings.

JUDGES TRAINING – January 16, 2016:

SPACE AGE IRISES by Al Elliott

On the screen HORTICULTURE AWARDS—Ribbons, Best Specimen of Show, Runner-Up to Best Specimen of Show, Horticultural Sweepstakes, Horticulture Sweepstakes Runner-Up, Best in Section—appeared as Al Elliott asked the attendees how many awards could a Space Age Iris receive at this Iris Show.

Three, twenty-three, five—the answers flew in the air as individuals lost themselves in deep thought in order to respond.

This is the way Judges Training began at 9 A.M. in Room 200 of the Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church January 16. Those who completed the test at 11:30 were the following:

Audrey Baker, Colleen Barnes, D. Boyle, Pat Byrne, Peggy Cathey, Shirley Friesen, Dennis Hartford, Linda Hartford, Vicki Howard, Jim Landers, Donna Little, Nelda Moore, Dell Perry, Tracey Rogers, Shelia Senghas, Ellen Singleton, Debra Strauss, and Kathy Wade. Others who enjoyed the programs were Barbara Elliott, Jaime Hadley, Debbie Hood, Kathy Petheram, Darla Smith, and Nicholas Sadler.

Al Elliott included the history of the Space Age Iris, a term coined by Lloyd Austin since this cultivar may trace its origin to bombardment with radiation from interstellar space. Austin also attributed its unusual appendage to favorable growing conditions with good nutrients in the soil. Sometimes during dry spells the horns, spoons, flounces in some varieties may become shorter or even disappear entirely. Nevertheless, three Space Age Irises have been awarded a Dykes Medal: Iris 'Thornbird,' 'Conjuration,' and 'Mesmerizer.'

Al also mentioned that flounces can be detrimental to a flower in garden judging since they can weigh the bloom down or distort the flower's shape.

Breakfast was served at 8:30 A.M. with coffee and juice, cinnamon rolls, Danish, ham, breads, fruit, yogurt, kolaches, and granola. Thanks to each person who generously supplied the wonderful food, and we needed food for thought.

This was an interesting Judges Training with many beautiful Space Age Irises that are also called Novelty Irises.

For Artistic Designs Al said that a 3x5 card interpreting each theme must be included. He listed Fireman and suggested that water be shown; Carpenter should feature decorative wood; and Astronaut should be a vertical design using a single cultivar that incorporates the name of the iris.

PHOTOGRAPHY FOR SHOW: "Tips for Improving Your Skills as a Flower Photographer"

by Dan and Peggy Cathey

According to Peggy Cathey preparation is the key for successful photography: get all your equipment together and in working order including new batteries and extra card. Then examine the subject, clean the ground, or move yourself away from distractions such as tool sheds, fences, water hoses, poles, and concentrate on one thing in the scene or focal point.

Shoot from an angle to get the best perspective, study the lighting or use a filter, get the best format (horizontal or vertical). Consider setting the focal point off center using the rule of thirds, but find something in your frame that will grab your viewer's eye and carefully think about how to position it to get a landscape. If you use a small camera, move the settings such as a macro mode for close ups with your elbows close to your body as you focus to hold the camera still. This mode will allow you to focus a little closer and will tell the camera to use a large aperture giving you a shallow depth of field. For sharp portraits use a black background. Learn to crop by getting in close or taking a wider angle shot.

The best time to photograph outdoors is sunrise to about 10 A.M. or two hours before sunset. Do not let shadows blacken the flower.

For the show your photograph should have a matt usually black or dark green so as not to distract from the iris flower. Refer to Dec.2015-Jan.2016 VOL. 25 #1 for Special Rules for Division VII Photography.

FOR THE SHOW:

DUTIES FOR HOSPITALITY (includes all members)

Two persons or more should be on duty and act as gracious hosts to welcome visitors, answer questions, discuss exhibits, and supply information about the American Iris Society and the local society, maintain cleanliness, guard property and see that all exhibits and awards are not removed until the appointed time.

2016 ISA SHOW SCHEDULE

On January 19, 2016, Lois Rose, AIS Exhibitions Committee Chair, finished reviewing and approved our show schedule. Our Show Registration Number is **2016-009**.

MINUTES OF THE IRIS SOCIETY OF AUSTIN
January 12, 2016

The meeting was called to order and presided by Pat Byrne.

Announcements:

Nelda and Donna brought items for the Region 17 basket that will be sent to the National meeting this year in New Jersey. Please bring some interesting items that you would like to contribute so we can get them delivered. Ken Fuchs is the Registrar for this year's meeting. It is not too late to send in your Registration!!

It was suggested that we include a name card on the monthly pot-luck dinner table with our dishes. Perhaps we could also make an Iris Society Cook Book!!

Treasurer's Report:

The ending monthly balance for November 2015 was \$16,497.24. The current balance on January 12, 2016 is \$15,608.24. Recent activity includes donation of \$250.00 to the Conservancy, Judges Training Room Rental, Rhizomes, and Calendars.

AAGC Council Report:

Conservancy – There is a search now for an Executive Director and VP of Operations. The kitchen now has a brand new stove/oven. Please do not hand wash the dishes. All dirty dishes need to be loaded into the dishwasher. The Ikebana Study Group is a new club joining AAGC. Zilker Garden Festival is April 2nd and 3rd, 2016. The gift shop stays open late on the nights of our meetings and members receive a 20% discount!! There is limited help available to us and we should coordinate to help setup the meeting space. It has been

requested that we provide a list of members to the front gate when there are activities for volunteers from our Society to gain entry at the gate. There was a letter passed around to be given to the city with member signatures and contact information to show support for the Conservancy.

Austin Iris Club business:

1. ISA Dues and Judges training fee were collected.
2. The next garden activity will be the preparations to move the Louisiana plantings up to the front bed area.
3. Judge's Training will be held on Saturday January 16th, 2016

Important Dates:

Iris Society of Austin – Next Meeting – Tuesday February 9, 2016.

ISA Show - Saturday April 9, 2016.

AIS National Convention Newark, New Jersey – May 25–28, 2016.

2016 Region 17 Meeting – August 19, 20, 2016

The meeting program presented by Donna Little and Jim Landers discussed hybridizing techniques.

The meeting was adjourned.

Dara E. Smith, Secretary

Submitted for Approval on: February 9, 2016.



Don Freeman's Groundhog Day
Surprise: 'Gen Gen' – Feb.2, 2016



Keith Keppel's rejects

Judges Training, Photography Program – January 16, 2016
Photos by Tracey Rogers





Please Join Us *Deep in the Heart of Texas*
 For the American Iris Society
2016 Region 17 Convention, August 19-20, 2016
 Sponsored by the Waco Iris Society



Hampton Inn & Suites Waco South, 2501 Marketplace Dr, Waco, TX 76711, 254-662-9500
 Room rates: 2 Queen or 1 King—\$109 per night, King Studio Suite—\$119 *per night (plus tax)*
Complimentary Deluxe Continental Breakfast & WiFi included.
 Please reserve your room by July 29 to receive group rate. Reservations may be made using the link below.
http://hamptoninn.hilton.com/en/hp/groups/personalized/A/ACTSOHX-WIS-20160819/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG

Registration Form

(Please print)

Name: _____

Additional Registrants: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Registration includes both Friday and Saturday night buffets.

Registration

IF POSTMARKED	Before June 30, 2016	July 1-31, 2016	After July 31, 2016	TOTAL
	_____ \$50	_____ \$55	_____ \$60 =	_____

Judges Training will be provided by Perry Dyer on Saturday and is not included in the registration fee.
 Judges Training—\$5.00 X number of attendees _____ = _____

Total Enclosed: _____

Payment Method: **Check**—Make payable to *Waco Iris Society*
 Credit Card - (VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express)
 CC# _____ MM/YY _____ CVV _____

Send Registration & Payment to:

WIS Region 17 Convention, c/o Ken Fuchs, 710 N 11th Street, Temple, TX 76501-3016, 254-721-6217