



# IRIS AUSTIN

A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin



Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

January 2022 — Vol. XXII #1

ISA Website: [http://www.kenfuchs42.net/isa\\_index.html](http://www.kenfuchs42.net/isa_index.html)

## Next Meeting:

**Tuesday, January 11, 2022 6:30 P.M.**  
Zilker Botanical Garden Auditorium  
2220 Barton Springs Road  
Austin, TX 78746

**2022 Iris Show** scheduled for Sunday, April 3. Begin making plans to celebrate your irises in the Show!

## FREEMAN SUNSHINE GARDEN VACATED AUGUST 28

David Kraemer and Jaime Hadley assisted Ellen Singleton, Nelda Moore, Dara Smith, Debbie Hood, Tracey Rogers, and Kathy Peteram to remove the cultivars in Don and Pat Freeman's Garden located at 4814 Sunshine Drive in Austin on the early morning of August 28. All of the rhizomes have been cleaned, trimmed, and washed for the September 11 Sale in the Norris Conference Center off West Anderson Lane.

Don died after a short illness and the members of the Iris Society really miss him.



## AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY CONVENTION TO BE HELD IN LAS CRUCES APRIL 11-16 2022

The second century of the American Iris Society starts in Las Cruces, the city of the Crosses, in New Mexico April 11-16, 2022. This Southwest city founded in 1849 at the end of the Mexican American War is located on El Camino Real, a Royal Road that served as passage in the 1600's from Mexico City to Santa Fe. In 1881 when the Santa Fe Railroad came to Las Cruces, the town became the largest city in the Mesilla Valley. Today it is the second largest city in New Mexico. Old Mesilla is the sister city to Las Cruces, where the Butterfield Stage Trail stopped and unique shops and restaurants line the plaza located near the Organ Mountain Desert Peaks National Monument in Dripping Springs. Over the mountains is White Sands Missile Range and further east is White Sands National Park, the largest gypsum white sand dunes in the world. In Alamogordo is the Museum of Space History and Three Rivers Petroglyphs.

Recently Richard Branson made the first commercial trip into space from the new Spaceport America that is north of Las Cruces.

If you travel to Mexico, you must bring your passport. The Convention Hotel Encanto de Las Cruces with 200 rooms and a special rate of \$109 per night can be reached by calling for



reservations at 1-866-383-0443 or <http://aisregion23.com/2022-national-convention/hotel/> to register online this month.

Six iris gardens will be on tour including Blue J Iris in Vado for the master planting. Calhoun Flower Farm in La Mesa has three hundred different varieties of irises that form the convention planting in memory of Nandine Calhoun, grandmother to this women-run business and an irisarian during her lifetime.



Blue Jay Iris



Calhoun Flower Farm

Then there is New Mexico University Fabian Garcia Science Center, where the beds were designed by students enrolled in the Environmental Science Department in partnership with the Mesilla Valley Iris Society.



Fabian Garcia Garden



Convention Chair Howie Dash at the planting at the Farm & Ranch Museum, July 29, 2019

The New Mexico Farm and Ranch Museum has raised beds of 153 varieties of convention irises of convention irises as well as exhibits showing thousands of years of agriculture in New Mexico. These exhibits are inside as well as outside where there are numerous different varieties of beef cattle.

Garden Number 5 exhibits Cynthia and Wes Wilson's Iris Inspire Us. Cynthia serves as president of the Mesilla Valley Iris Society, the host of this convention. Here are 150 varieties of arilbred irises that have been featured during the 2018 Aril Trek. This garden is also home to Picacho Mountain Iris with 600 plantings plus 200 convention cultivars.



Wilson Garden

Scarlett Ayres Garden features about 600 varieties of her own irises and art that she created. This garden was also on the 2018 Aril Trek. Its location is on the East Mesa, where the irises are usually in bloom a week later than those in the other gardens. This garden has the largest planting of Louisiana irises.





Scarlett Ayres Garden

**DON FREEMAN HONORED IN ROSE GARDEN  
DEC. 14**

Don Freeman, a founding member of the Iris Society of Austin and also a member of several other garden clubs throughout the years, was honored December 14 with his name added to the Memorial Arch in the Rose Garden of Zilker Botanical Garden, 2022 Barton Springs Road.



Photo by Audrey Baker

Don and Pat Freeman won Best of Show in 1993, 1995, 2003, 2010, and 2013. They also won when they entered the Belton Iris Show in 2012 and 2017, and they won 21 Silver Medals in Austin and Belton. Not only did the husband and wife team gain awards in Iris Shows, they also received awards in many flower shows as they worked during the Zilker Garden Festival. Don and Pat joined the Austin Area Begonia Society, the Rose Society, Master Gardeners, the Bulb Society, and both worked diligently in each club as

officers and members. Don also taught classes to help many gardeners as he worked alongside of them often on hands and knees.



Photo by Audrey Baker

Don Freeman was one of the best horticulturists in Zilker Botanical Gardens. He presented detailed designs to the council, and then worked in the gardens, where he made sure that soil conditions were correct for the plants, that water was available to keep them growing, and he would weed the beds. He was a genuine farmer.

**REMEMBERING PAULINE  
GUERRERO**

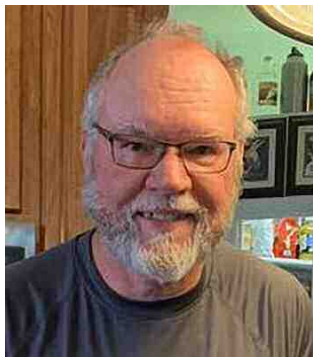
Our belated but deepest sympathy is extended to the Pauline Castruita Guerrero Family. Pauline and her husband, Leonard, worked diligently to bring The Iris Society of Austin to Zilker Botanical Garden. Often Pauline brought her grandson to work during the Zilker Garden Festival. Pauline was almost 95 when she passed on June 25 after an illness of several months during the time when COVID kept things shut.





## IRIS SEED GERMINATION

Delane H. Langton of Billings, Montana has submitted an article about obtaining seeds, marking the crosses in his Stud Book, and showing the results of his diligent work in Tall Talk for Fall on pages 17-22. He has many photographs in his step by step process. He dries the seeds and then rinses them before planting them in pots. These seeds spend 90 days in the refrigerator.



## GARDENING WITH MINIATURE IRISES

While the Iris Society of Austin has members who love to grow Standard Dwarf Bearded Irises, when someone shares rhizomes for the garden in Zilker, the dwarf irises die and disappear forever. The same thing happens to Spurias that go dormant by showing brown leaves on the bloom stalk. They are dead and they were pulled out of the garden.

Standard Dwarf Bearded and miniature dwarf bearded irises are tiny varieties that can be added to a rock garden where the rhizomes can be tucked in between rocks or they can be grown with pansies, daffodils, species tulips, and some companion plants that will not cover the miniatures. These dwarf irises are floriferous on multiple stems on each plant. They bloom early in spring or late in winter. Their carpet can turn into a mass of rhizomes that can be protected by mulch and some pea gravel to keep them safe during a freeze.



*Iris pumila*, photographed in Lower Austria

Remember that they have been bred with *Iris pumila* (pygmy or dwarf iris) in the 1930s -1950s from a hybrid that existed along the mountains of the Adriatic coast before it reached the Balkans into Austria and the Czech Republic and the far east where the Ural Mountains rise in Russia. Although these irises go dormant in summer, they return with great vigor.

The Schreiner Iris Garden worked with seeds from Romania, Ukraine, and Austria and passed on reddish hues coming from Ukrainian seed. When Robert Schreiner sent Austrian seed to Paul Cook in Indiana, two of the bluest MDB irises emerged in 1955 — ‘Remnant’ and ‘Sky Patch.’ The first crosses from *I. pumila* suffered from the heat in the south. Their second route was a successful one because this tetraploid was crossed with tall bearded tetraploids, 40 chromosomes. Thus these genes contributed to the development of many TBs as well as miniature dwarf, standard dwarf, and intermediate bearded irises.

Always remember that most often a plant that goes dormant in a public garden will be pulled out of its comfort zone because “It died.”



‘Chubby Cheeks’ - Black 1985

Iris ‘Chubby Cheeks,’ an SDB hybridized by Paul Black, received the American Iris Society Board of Directors Award, an award that is rarely given. This award honors an iris that has extraordinary breeding but has never been chosen to receive the highest honor of getting a Dykes Medal.