



IRIS AUSTIN

A Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin



Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

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ISA Website: http://www.kenfuchs42.net/isa_index.html

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, November 8, 2022

6:30 P.M.

Zilker Botanical Garden - Auditorium

2220 Barton Springs Road

Austin, TX 78746

It's Thanksgiving!

Ham and Turkey with dressing

Pot Luck for side dishes of vegetables and desserts



2023 American Iris Society National Convention

April 12-16 Grapevine, TX

Region 17 2023 Meeting

August 4-5 in Weatherford, TX

'Where the West Begins'

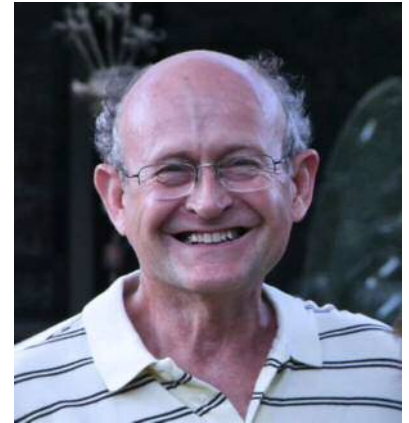
Hosted by Fort Worth Iris Society

Choose a nickname for the Friday night game and do not forget to register to see Howie Dash, a New Mexico hybridizer

No meeting in December!

GREAT HYBRIDIZERS COME TO AUSTIN, TOO

Hooker Nichols, a well-known Texas hybridizer of irises and first runner-up with 22 votes with 'Heartbreak Warfare', received the Award of Merit and much recognition during the AIS Region 17 Meeting, when he won the Texas Hybridizer Award 2022.



Hooker and his wife, fellow hybridizer Bonnie Nichols, have a commercial garden, Hillcrest Iris & Daylily Gardens, located at 15076 County Road 349 Terrell, Texas, 1 mile north of US Highway 80 between Elmo and Wills Point.

On January 14, 2023 he will provide a three-hour Judges Training Class on Louisiana irises in Room 200 of the West Lake Hills Presbyterian Church located at 7127 Bee Caves Road, Austin, TX 78746.

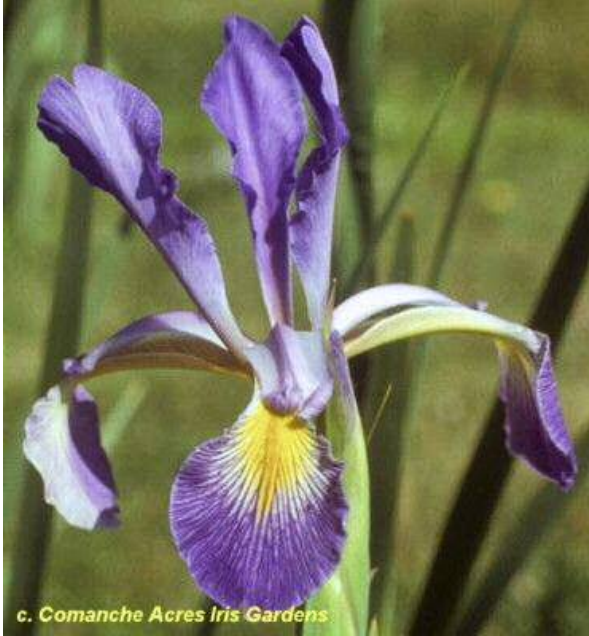
Please invite your friends to this study.



'Heartbreak Warfare' - Nichols 2013 LA

SPURIAS – HISTORY AND GROWING THEM

Spuria irises are native to the area around the Mediterranean Sea from Spain around to North Africa. These beardless or apogon irises are found in lesser numbers as far north as eastern England and Denmark and as far east as Russia, Afghanistan, and western China.



'Monspur' - Foster 1890



Iris halophila

Sir Michael Foster introduced Spuria irises into England in late nineteenth century. One of the best known hybrids was 'Monspur' that served quite valuable to iris hybridizers such as T. A. Washington, the first American breeder of spurias that inherited summer green foliage from 'Monspur' and the

species *I. halophila* as breeders strived to improve them by making them shorter with blooms larger and a greater bud count on their tough stalks.



Iris ochroleuca

Eric Nies worked with *I. ochroleuca* and 'Monspur' while Ben Hager won the Nies Award for 'Elixir' and then in 1973 for 'Archie Owen,' a flaring iris, and in 1979 for 'Ila Crawford,' a yellow and white ruffled flower. Other breeders from other parts of the country also won the Nies Award or contributed new forms, shorter plants with compact blossoms and new colors. Dave Niswonger in 1980 won with 'Buttered Chocolate.'



'Buttered Chocolate' - Niswonger 1974

While hybridizers in the United States had dominated the scene, other contributors have been

from Europe, New Zealand, and Australia.

COMPARING TALL BEARDED AND SPURIA IRISES

Spuria irises bloom one to two weeks after the tall bearded irises. The blooms and stalks are tough, but the flower stalks should be cut when the buds just begin to show color, and the bloom will last in an arrangement for 3 or 4 days.

Spurias are the tallest of irises — 3 to 4 feet or even taller. The flower stalk should have at least 2 buds in its terminal and each branch. Three or four buds per stalk are common, but 7 flower buds to a stalk are possible. The branching is sinuous.

Leathery leaves, woody rhizomes, and wiry roots make up the plant that must be kept moist like Louisianas when preparing the rhizome for a sale.

Many cultivars are summer dormant; therefore, they need no water except for rain. In cooler parts of the country spurias may stay summer-green like 'Belise.' These irises need to be watered if rains do not provide enough moisture for their growth.



'Belise' - Simonet 1964

Spuria breeding has reached about 8 generations while bearded irises have been bred for over 25 to 30 generations or 150 years; therefore, the genetic potential has barely been touched for spurias.

Spurias can take more water and fertilizer than tall bearded irises. Plant the wiry rhizomes about an inch deeper than tall bearded rhizomes, which can come to the surface as sun worshippers. Spurias can use extra slow-release fertilizer plus super phosphate while growing in a compost-soil mix. Extra water during rains can cause mustard-seed fungus, the

spuria enemy. Rich organic soil that does not dry out and a site in full sun are the keys to growing spurias successfully. Also keep them well weeded to prevent fungal disease.

FROM SEED TO SEEDLING FOR IRISES

Good detailed records and properly labeled plants are important when hybridizing irises. The parent plants must be labeled and records should include the full date of the cross and the names of the parent plants: Pod parent X Pollen Parent. Attach the label to the stalk just below the ovary of the pollinated flower.

Place the pollen on the stigma of the pod parent that you have studied for performance and production of offspring that will improve the species. The pod parent flower is ready to receive pollen grains early in the morning when the stigmatic lip has separated from the style branch. When the flower is open after 3 or 4 hours, the stigma is moist and untouched. Now the hybridizer can clip the falls so that no bee or other insect can land and help him make the cross. Better yet, cage the plant with an insect-proof cover or tightly woven cloth to keep any verbena bud moths out. Stake the stalk to protect it from potential hazards.

Hybridizers clip the anthers leaving parts of their filaments from the stamen of the pollen parent and dabs them onto all 3 stigmas of the pod parent.



It takes 7-10 days to form the seedpod and 60-80 days for seeds to ripen to crack the brown-black pod and release up to 75 seeds. The seeds will ripen in a cool dry place, and may survive for 15 years. They are equipped with built-in germination inhibitors that slow germination until conditions are ideal. Even washing the seeds will soften them and allow

germination. Plant the seeds close together about a seed diameter apart one inch deep in rows that are 4 inches apart. Mark each row with a label that includes the name of the parent and the number of the cross—the same information that was on the seed stalk of the pod parent. Also record the dates of planting and transplanting in the record book.

Cover the seeds and lightly press the soil. Put leaves over the tamped soil and water the seedbed well. Then keep the bed moist, not wet. Remove the mulch in January and use plastic covers over the cold frames. On hot days ventilate the seedbed. Growth will begin in March or late in April when the seedbeds are open. By May remove the cold frame. Once the seedlings are 1-2 inches tall, transplant them in rows in a well-drained sunny location with a foot apart.

Not all of the seeds will germinate the first year. Keep a schedule of fertilizing with a weak mix of water soluble fertilizer for flowering plants. If these grow vigorously and flower the following year, then the hybridizer can evaluate them and destroy them or keep them.

Minutes of the ISA meeting, 9/13/22

President Ellen Singleton called the meeting to order and introduced new member Laura Moorman. Ellen announced that our next meeting will be on the third Tuesday in October, Oct. 18.

Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Tracey Rogers gave the treasurer's report, which was also approved.

AAGC has announced that the Don Freeman memorial bench will be placed on the west side of the Zilker rose garden, under the trees. This will also be near the new location of the iris and daylily beds, thus making it an appropriate location for memories of Don, who was active in all three societies.

To make a donation to Zilker Gardens, go to <https://zilker garden.org/donate/>.

AAGC dues are going up from \$10 to \$13 per member. ISA pays those dues for its members.

AAGC also announced that a new garden club is

starting: the Tejas Garden Club.

Between October 22 and November 5 the existing Zilker iris and daylily beds will be cleaned out and the plants moved to new beds next to the rose garden. Volunteers will be needed for this work!

During discussion of problems with the storage of bottles for display of irises at the spring show, it was suggested that it would be better to have members take the bottles home after the next meeting and bring them back for the show (with their show irises in them when possible). Audrey Baker made a motion to do this for next spring's meeting. The motion was seconded and passed.

Everyone should bring a box or boxes to the meeting on October 18th to use in taking bottles home and bringing them back for the show.

Our show is scheduled for April 22, with a backup date of April 8.

The national convention will be in Grapevine, Texas, on April 12-16.

Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Wylie in the absence of secretary Dara Smith

Minutes of the October 18, 2022 ISA Meeting

The meeting was called to order and presided over by Tracey Rogers in the absence of Ellen Singleton.

Thank you to Carolyn Wylie for preparing the Minutes from the September 13, 2022 meeting.

Copies of the meeting minutes were read and approved as amended.

The Treasurer's Report was presented. The account balance as of October 18, 2022 is \$15,950.46. Recent transactions included in this balance are related to the sale (plants, memberships and other sale items). There was a motion to approve the Treasurer's report and the motion passed.

AAGC:

The auditorium will not be set up in any special configuration for meetings. If we want to have audio/

audio/visual equipment we will need to set it up ourselves. There will be tables and chairs set up.

ISA Business:

Moving Show Vases out of the Bev Shed - Shirley Smith loaded up all the boxes of vases from the Bev shed and brought the truck full of vases to the front of the building. Everyone that came to the meeting has taken the vases to store them for use at the show. There was a sign-up list for everyone that took vases to list the amount they have taken and these will be used when we have our show. Thank you Shirley for loading everything up!

Iris Beds Information - On October 1st & 5th, several Austin Daylily Society members & Donna Little & Ellen Singleton helped remove mulch, irrigation hoses, & old roses from 2 Rose Garden beds. New soil will be filled in later. The next phase of planting new smaller roses, irises, & daylilies is to be announced. Donna & Ellen weeded the end iris bed & the plants still look pretty good. To help out & be notified of future workdays, please go to givepulse.com. Shirley Smith is developing computer screenshots to guide us through the process of signing up online. Thank you, Shirley!! There will be more information for the "moving day" as this time approaches.

Judge's Training - ISA will resume its regularly hosted Judges Training in January 2023!! Nelda Moore has secured a location at the Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church (7127 Bee Cave Road, Austin TX 78746) for a Judge's training on January 14, 2023. Judy Schneider will be our invited presenter. Breakfast treats at 8a and class starts at 9a.

Jaime Hadley circulated a sign-up sheet at the meeting for anyone interested in purchasing the new revision of the *Handbook for Judges and Show Officials*. ISA will make a club order for the paper only (no cover) for \$20 each. The pages will now fit in a regular 8"x10" 3-ring binder. Please let Jaime Hadley know if you want to order a new handbook.

Jim Landers was recognized with the Region 17 Service Award at the 2022 Region 17 meeting. Congratulations Jim! We are very lucky to have you as a member of the ISA. Thank you for all that you do for our club and our Region!

Iris Show - We need a volunteer to be the 2023 Show Chair. We will be selecting a theme, judges, and classifications for our show on April 22, 2023. Members that have been the Show Chair are available for advice. (Nelda Moore, Jaime Hadley, Jim Landers)

Club Directory - A request was made to update and publish a new Club Directory that will include the By-Laws. Members that volunteered to do this are Jaime Hadley and Shirley Smith.

Important Dates:

November Meeting: Tuesday November 8, 2022

Judge's Training Saturday January 14, 2023 at 8am @ Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church

American Iris Society Convention April 12-26, 2023 Grapevine, TX

ISA Show April 22, 2023 at Zilker Botanical Garden

Program:

Distribution of ISA Show vases to members for storage before the meeting to clean out the Bev shed.

The meeting was adjourned.

Dara E. Smith, Secretary

Submitted for Approval on: November 8, 2022