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January 2012 — vol 21 #1



A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin

IRIS AUSTIN



next ISA meeting >>>

Iris Society of Austin Meeting
Tuesday January 10, 2012
7:00 pm (gates close at 7:00)

Late? call 477-8672 ext 13

Zilker Garden Center
2220 Barton Springs Rd
Austin TX 78746

- Potluck Supper
- Business Meeting
- Program to be announced
- Bring your 2012 ISA dues!

NOTE - If Garden Center A/C repairs make the building too cold on Jan 10, the ISA meeting will be postponed until Jan 24 at 7pm

next AAGC meeting >>>

Austin Area Garden Council Meeting
Tuesday January 10, 2012
10:00 am

Zilker Garden Center

Debora Boyle – ISA representative

upcoming events >>>

Feb 14, 2012 – Regular Meeting

Apr 8, 2012 – Annual Iris Show

2012 Judges Training

Bonnie Nichols teaches on January 14th

Judges Training is a unique way of learning about irises from experienced dedicated judges, growers, and hybridizers who have studied constantly, have visited gardens throughout the country, and have grown a representative collection of irises. These accredited judges are the backbone of the American Iris Society judging program that select award winning irises each year. It is their voting that determines which irises receive awards, and therefore, which irises will be recommended to the public.

On January 14 Bonnie Nichols, award-winning hybridizer, will provide Judges Training in Austin on the topic of bearded irises, including space-agers and broken color. Bonnie and her husband Hooker Nichols grow and sell thousands of

irises in their gardens in Mesquite and Dallas.

A light breakfast will be served, and the class will conclude with a written test prepared by Bonnie with a minimum of 20 questions.

Cost is \$5 per person
Registration at 8:30am
Class from 9am to Noon

Ross Hall at the Westlake Hills
Presbyterian Church
7127 Bee Caves Road, 78746

From 360 go west on Bee Caves Rd. Turn left on Barton Creek Blvd. Immediately turn left into the church parking lot, and then keep right, heading around to the parking garage. Ross Hall has a separate entrance that will be marked.

English Box?

Consider entering an English Box in the 2012 Iris Show. This is a great option if you have several nice blooms that are on not-so-nice stalks. An English Box consists of five individual flowers of the same classification. Each blossom must be correctly named, positioned, and labeled by using a 3" X 5" card mounted outside the 18" X 24" X 4" green Styrofoam box.

A Look at Japanese Iris

Of these unusual irises, *Iris versicolor* and *Iris virginica* are found in North America, *Iris pseudacorus* or yellow flag occurs in Europe and North Africa, *Iris laevigata* and *Iris ensata* or *Iris kaempferi* (Hanashobu) grow in central Russia and Siberia into northern China, Korea, and Japan.

All are rhizomatous, moisture-loving plants growing in acid soils of marshes or on the edges of streams. They are planted about three inches deep in rich soil that has plenty of organic matter. The leaves are long and narrow with a distinct midrib. Their color varies from yellow-green to blue-green as the plants grow upright or fountainlike.

Flowers may reach up to 8 or 10 inches across while new hybrids may have up to 10 or more blooms to a stem, giving them a long flowering period. In Japan where the *Iris ensata* are grown in pots under special conditions the blooms produced as a result of generous feeding are 12-14 inches across.



According to Japanese iris expert and hybridizer Clarence Mahan, these exotic irises have been cultivated in Japan for 500 years but breeding did not begin until the early part of the nineteenth century.

At present there are three-fall types or singles, six-fall types, and multiple petal types such as nine-petal or even twelve-petal flowers. The style arms may be vertical or graceful arches, or they may be fully converted to petals. Even the anthers may be conventional, may have petal-like extensions, or they may be converted to petals. There may also be extra petaloids. Standards may be vertical or angled, plain or fancy. Falls may be tailored, ruffled, or fluted. Signals can be large or small, sharp or diffuse.

Japanese irises have the most diversity of pattern of any iris. These include selfs, veining, rays, bicolors, marbled, splashed, blends, shading, sanding, mottled, and brushed. The flower textures can be smooth, rough, waxy, velvety, creped, or quilted.

For many years, irises and bridges have been associated with Japanese gardens and with each other. One legend tells about some Japanese fishermen that were lost. As they pined for their families while they sat on the shore, they began to cry themselves to sleep. When they awoke, they saw Japanese irises where their tears had been. The



Above: JI Diomedes - (Sterling Innerst R. 1991)
Below: JI Caprician Butterfly (W. Marx by D. Rogers, R. 1984)

beauty of the irises gave them hope.

Thomas Hogg was the first to import Japanese irises to the United States. John Lewis Childs of Long Island later owned a collection and sold thousands throughout the United States. Arthur Hazzard of Kalamazoo, Michigan began growing these irises with seven varieties from Child's Nursery. In 1957 when he retired, he began hybridizing and eventually introduced ninety varieties, many of which earned the Payne Award. That award was named after the best known hybridizer, W Arlie Payne of Terre Haute, Indiana, who worked with Edo varieties beginning in 1930 and continued to improve branching, bud count, and plant and flower substance for forty years before he began to introduce them to the public. Perhaps Currier Mc Ewan of Maine has done most to develop the flower in size and color combinations. He has developed tetraploid flowers, which have double the number of chromosomes than the normal diploid flowers and so produce large spectacular flowers.

Volunteer Hours

The Iris Society of Austin has two gardens to weed or maintain through the Adopt-A-Garden Program. One is the newer area near Barton Springs Road. Daylilies are near the long raised bed full of bearded irises. The other huge bed is in the Rose Garden. The gardens are divided by the Walk of Friends. This older bed has border bearded, intermediate bearded, tall bearded irises, and some spurias. Louisianas irises are growing in white tubs just behind the raised beds. Eventually the irises will be moved to the front area.

If you wish to work in any of these areas, please sign the paper inserted in the clipboard in the library when you arrive. After you have worked in the gardens, please return to the library to sign out, noting the time.

In this way the Austin Iris Society gets credit for the hours you worked.

Other volunteer hours that can be reported to the council include the following:

- cooking or baking for the council meetings;
- trimming the Zilker Christmas trees;
- educating the public by speaking to garden clubs;
- writing iris articles for publications;
- preparing the Iris Austin newsletter;
- volunteering during Zilker Garden Festival;
- growing plants to give to Kid's Corner;
- attending the AAGC council meetings.

These hours are reported to Debora Boyle, Council Representative.

last meeting's minutes >>

There was no December meeting of the Austin Iris Society. Minutes from the November 2011 meeting were printed in the December 2012 newsletter.

welcome new members >>

Please make sure to look for these folks at an upcoming meeting and welcome them to our club:

- Esther Stone

time to renew dues >>>

Ken Fuchs will be collecting dues for the ISA 2012 membership year at our next regular meeting, January 10. Membership dues are \$12 for an individual and \$18 for a joint membership. If you wish to renew your membership early, you can send a check made out to Iris Society of Austin directly to one of these folks:

Ken Fuchs
 710 N 11th St, Temple, TX, 76501-3016
 Pat Byrne
 1102 Aster, Katy, TX, 77493-1825

April Show Prep

Preparing for the Artistic Division

It is a good time to use any creative skills while arranging fresh flowers for the holidays. Practice now and during Valentine's Day to enjoy live blossoms, perhaps even an iris or two.

Place your creation in a niche 24" wide and 40" high. Add some sea shells, weathered wood, or dried plant material to see how some of these items will enhance the design. The background might need muted colors to suggest an outdoor scene.

With all this in your imagination, then examine the scene with a critical eye. Does the scene enhance the design or is it so overpowering

that your eye is drawn to the background, and not the flower design?

On a 3"x5" card explain briefly your interpretation of this design. Can you give the name of the iris included in the arrangement? This is important. Did you include a Louisiana with a bud before you created the line with bearded irises? Is this a triangle or Japanese creation representing Heaven, Man, and Earth? Have you consulted the Show Schedule to check the points for conformance to schedule, design, color use, creativity, and distinction?

Below: 2011 winner of best Artistic Design, by Pat Freeman



More Judges Training

Each club is encouraged to conduct Judges Training each year, and many of the Region 17 clubs do it in Winter and Spring. Dell Perry, our Region 17 Judges Training Chair, says, "These classes are an excellent way for club members to broaden their knowledge about irises: different varieties, what makes a 'good' iris, what judges look for in a show, etc., as well as help our AIS judges obtain and/or maintain their judgeships. Quite a few of our current judges got interested in becoming a judge after attending a class."

The **Iris Society of Dallas** presents a class on **Spuria Iris** led by Keith Smith.

January 15, 2012 Noon – 3pm \$10

North Haven Gardens – Meeting Room, 7700 Northaven Road, Dallas, TX

Contact: Gordon Carver, 817-304-3841, gcarver@flash.net

The **Lone Star Iris Society** presents a class on **Spuria Iris** led by Dell Perry

March 3, 2012 10am – Noon \$10

First United Methodist Church – Fellowship Hall, 400 W 1st St, Hico, TX

Contact: Naomi Nabors or Mary Huggins, 254-597-1183 (Naomi),

254-796-4041 (Mary), howdynabors@yahoo.com (Naomi)

The **Johnson Co Iris and Daylily Society** presents 2 classes on **Arilbred Iris** led by Dell Perry

March 10, 2012 11am – 2pm \$10

United Cooperative Svcs – Community Room, 3309 N Main St, Cleburne, TX

Contact: Laura Smargiasso, 817-202-9808, 817-846-5359c, smarg1@aol.com

April Show Prep

Preparing for the Horticultural Division

A container with some water will be provided for each entry in the horticulture division. We will also supply some pieces of black foam pipe insulation to help wedge the stem securely in the mouth of the vase.

It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to place the iris with its best view forward and the bottom branch exhibited above the container's opening. Be sure to groom the stalk properly - no fingerprints, no insects, no spider webs (or spiders)!

Feel free to use a green leaf wrapped around the stalk to position the iris above the lip of the container if this holds the cultivar better than the black foam provided. The stalk should not be shoved too far down into the container.

Display the completed entry tag directly under the perfect face of the iris, which is proudly standing straight. The judges will look at the tag side first before checking all sides of the blooms and stalk for shape, substance and any imperfections.

AAGC minutes >>

Austin Area Garden Council Tuesday December 13, 2011

The Austin Area Garden Council met December 13, 2011, in the auditorium of the Zilker Garden Center with Donna Friedenreich presiding. She mentioned the passing of time and the death of Charlotte Cranberg's husband. She also recalled the time that seventy-year-old Mr. Taniguchi waded in the lotus pond as he designed and created the Oriental Garden alone for the city of Austin. After all of these years the city is now sand blasting, sealing, and working on these ponds with the monies donated for this work. The service on the air conditioning has almost been completed.

Council President praised the work of Velia Sanchez-Ruiz and her assistants for decorations of poinsettias on green tablecloths. Nelda Moore thanked the clubs for decorating Christmas trees for the Greene Room. She noted that the ornaments must be removed by the afternoon of January 6 or the morning of the 7th. These boxed items must be returned to Bev's Shed.

The Gift Shop sold many items on this date at a discount of 30 percent.

With a city budget shortfall and the small admission to the Zilker Botanical Gardens, a different plan must be taken into consideration since it does not appear that \$500,000 can be generated by the entrance fees.

Dinner was served at 11:15 A.M.

submitted by Nelda Moore