



*Tucson Botanical Garden Iris border with view of distant hills ~ SOURCE: TAIS Website*

## Growing Iris In Desert Climates ~ *Cynthe Brush*

The Tucson Area Iris Society (TAIS) hosted a recent Zoom workshop with Adam Farrell-Wortman, head horticulturalist at Tucson Botanical Garden. The focus was on how they care for and nourish their lovely iris beds in a challenging desert climate.

The workshop was announced in TAIS August 2020 newsletter and I requested permission to listen in. So glad I did, as Adam shared a lot of interesting tips!

**SOIL AMENDMENTS & FERTILIZING:** As Arizona iris gardeners soon learn, our desert soils lack organic matter and do not have the slightly acidic pH most plants, including iris, prefer. The advantage of slightly acid soils is nutrients are more readily

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# PRESIDENT SHERRY'S MESSAGE

Wow, what a year! While not the first time in history a pandemic like this has been experienced, it is the first time for most of us that we have had so much of our lives shut down, had to stay at arm's length from family & friends and had to wear face coverings to go pretty much anywhere.

Thank goodness we are gardeners. We have a sanctuary that many do not, although I do believe more folks are now gardening with flowers and vegetable than ever before. It is an awesome way to positively fill time while you're home from work and to provide food for the table.

Fingers are crossed that we will be able to have our November meeting. If we are unable to have it physically, we will try to have it virtually using either Zoom or Google meets. If that is the case, we will send everyone information on how to join into the meeting on their computers, laptops, tablets, or phones.

Thanks to our membership chair & treasurer, it was suggested that all membership dues paid for 2020 be extended to cover the 2021 membership year. The board thought that was an excellent idea! So we will not be sending out notices to pay your 2021 dues – they are already paid!

I want to thank Dennis Leubkin for getting the irrigation system at Yavapai College Sculpture Garden working. Several of us went out and corrected some of the problems Dennis had identified. Then Dennis followed up and made sure we are finally watering the Sculpture Garden. Next year should be a much better for all of our gardens as we found because we had not been going to the gardens due to the pandemic, we had several problems at both the Sculpture Garden & Embry-Riddle.

We did have our Summer Rhizome Sale this year online. It was a great success! Our net earning for the sale were \$3,647.51. With the two online sales this year, we have completely covered the Yavapai College endowment and scholarship, our donations to Yavapai Food Bank & AIS Region 15, all our expenses, and have put away additional money for the 2021 Region 15 Trek to be held here in October. We also have money ready for the 2021 year, so we are in good shape.

Many, many thanks to Brenda Griffin for taking care of the rhizomes for the sale (we took over her garage for weeks, which meant her cars were out in the hottest weather we have had). Brenda cleaned, pulled orders, and made sure everything went according to plan. Thanks to Judy Book for amazing pictures, labels, and helping organize at Brenda's. We did have two potting parties for all the left-over rhizomes so a big shout out to Judy & Stan Book, Cynthe Brush, Kathleen Shaffer, Diane Thornbrugh, Nancy Lefler, Susan Belding, Vicki Hughes & Bridget Bernardi – Everyone made the potting go quickly. (Hope I didn't miss anyone...)

Brenda is going to take care of our little ones until next spring. She has built a new home for them to keep them safe and healthy. Her care of our potted iris assures us we will have an awesome spring sale in 2021. I hope everyone is staying cool & safe. Hopefully, we will see you in November. ~ Sherry

## PAIS September '20 Meeting:

### Sept. 12th, CANCELLED

Board Meeting: 10am

General Meeting: 1:30pm

Stoneridge Community Center

1300 Stoneridge Drive

Prescott Valley, AZ 86314





# 2020 CALENDAR & ANNOUNCEMENTS



## 2020 PAIS Calendar

Remember, all members are invited to join us at board meetings and your comments are always welcome. The board meetings are held mornings of the general meeting in the kitchen area next to the community center room where we hold regular PAIS meetings.

The following schedule does not include garden maintenance and other needs that will be scheduled on an as needed basis.

**September 12 ~ CANCELLED ~** Board Meeting 10am  
 General Meeting 1:30pm Stoneridge Community Center

**November 14 ~ PENDING ~** Board Meeting 10am  
 General Meeting 1:30pm Stoneridge Community Center



### Prescott Area Iris Society

Robin Walter, Membership  
[redstickrob@gmail.com](mailto:redstickrob@gmail.com)

#### Notice to all Members

As we are aware, 2020 has been a challenging year for us all! It has been a time of sadness and of kindness too.

On that note, the PAIS board has decided that because we have had only one general meeting for the year (February) and possibly no other gatherings for the rest of the year, that it's only fair to extend everyone's membership for one year.

Be assured that when there are any upcoming meetings or events, you will be informed via group email and/or the PAIS newsletter.

As trying as this year has been, at least there is the garden! Happy 'irising' and we all hope to catch up soon.

Regards,

Robin Walter



# CONTACT INFO. BIRTHDAYS

## CONTACT US

President: Sherry Williams [duckwalkdesigns@gmail.com](mailto:duckwalkdesigns@gmail.com)  
 1st Vice President: Marty Boxer [martin.boxer@asu.edu](mailto:martin.boxer@asu.edu)  
 2nd Vice President: Kathleen Shaffer [koicats@sbcglobal.net](mailto:koicats@sbcglobal.net)  
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 Secretary: Diane Thornbrugh [dianelt5@icloud.com](mailto:dianelt5@icloud.com)  
 Alternate Secretary: Barbie Harlib [bharlib@gmail.com](mailto:bharlib@gmail.com)  
 Treasurer: Eugene Zielinski [eez55@earthlink.net](mailto:eez55@earthlink.net)  
 Director at Large: Barb McCurry [bj4mccurry@hotmail.com](mailto:bj4mccurry@hotmail.com)  
 Membership: Robin Walter [redstickrob@gmail.com](mailto:redstickrob@gmail.com)  
 Publicity: Bill Walter [Tasmania.bill@gmail.com](mailto:Tasmania.bill@gmail.com)  
 Sculpture Garden: Dennis Luebkin [dluebkin@g.com](mailto:dluebkin@g.com)  
 Hospitality: (Temp - Sherry, Amy & Loretta)

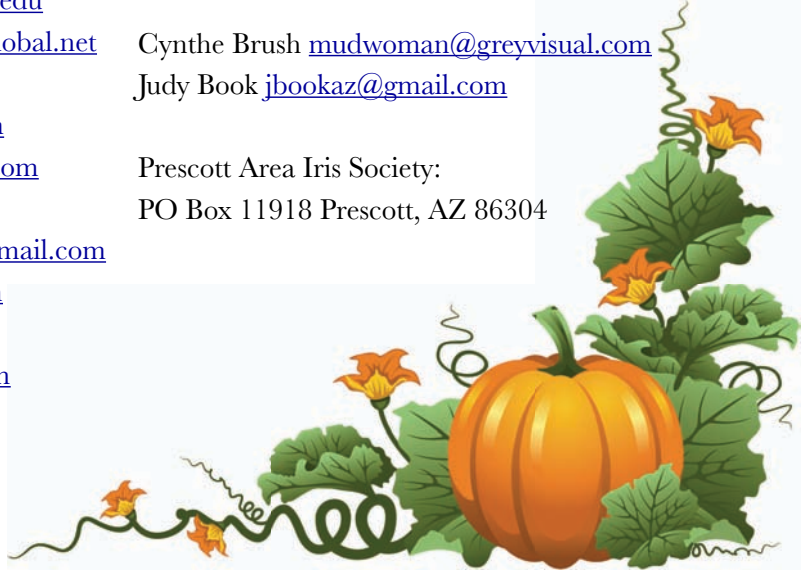
Newsletter: Vicki Hughes [vimticki@hotmail.com](mailto:vimticki@hotmail.com)

Cynthe Brush [mudwoman@greyvisual.com](mailto:mudwoman@greyvisual.com)

Judy Book [jbookaz@gmail.com](mailto:jbookaz@gmail.com)

Prescott Area Iris Society:

PO Box 11918 Prescott, AZ 86304



## *Best Wishes to Our Friends with September & October Birthdays!!!*

### September

Marilyn Wiley ~ September 14th  
 Joanne Moorhouse ~ September 23rd  
 Laine Kihlsrnom ~ September 26th

### October

Jean Cole ~ October 1st  
 TG Shaffer ~ October 5th  
 Frank Giovenco ~ October 8th  
 Deb Wade ~ October 10th  
 Patrick Beatty ~ October 16th  
 Gayle Coyne ~ October 16th  
 Brenda Griffin ~ October 16th  
 Dede Erceg ~ October 25th  
 Kathy Sisley ~ October 25th  
 Heather Blakley ~ October 31st  
 Linda Guy ~ October 31st





# GROWING IRIS IN DESERT CLIMATES (CONT.)

## Tucson Botanical Garden Iris



Photos Courtesy:  
Tucson Area Iris Society

available to the plants, helping them thrive. So Adam uses lots of unprocessed organic matter like blood, bone & feather meals, as well as greensand, forked into the beds whenever it's convenient. The groundskeepers also top dress all the iris beds with a couple of inches of organic compost at the beginning of the growing season. The advantage of using unprocessed organic nutrients to nourish our iris is the plants will draw upon them when needed in their growing cycle, eliminating the gardening complication of timing 'fertilizing sessions' to the calendar. The gardening staff applies a fish emulsion foliar spray to give the iris a boost early in the season as well.

**PLANTING:** Adam has iris rhizomes planted with their tops 1-2 inches below the soil surface, deeper than most iris culture instructions advise. He learned this approach from asking / observing local commercial iris growers whose businesses depend on selling healthy rhizomes of excellent quality. There are several important reasons to use this technique in desert iris gardens. Exposure to the stress of our intense desert sunshine...

- ~ Limits rhizome growth size
- ~ Reduces flowering frequency
- ~ Shortens bloom time

**MULCHING:** If your iris beds don't need replanting now, than Adam suggests using a thick mulch (2-3 inches) of wood chips. The Tucson Botanical Garden uses locally available pecan, mulch which has an advantage of being slightly acidic counteracting the soil's inherent alkalinity. Mulch offers two important advantages:

- 1) Cools the soil surface 10-15F in the summer
- 2) Warms the soil surface 5-10F in the winter

**WATERING:** The TBG iris beds are drip-irrigated using 1/2-inch line with emitters spaced 6" apart. These lines are laid in a zig-zag pattern, 2-3 feet apart throughout the beds. Thinner gauge, 1/4-inch lines, would need to be placed closer together for adequate coverage. Watering during iris summer dormancy is important to keep the rhizomes from being stressed by heat and lack of moisture. Irrigation runs two days a week for 2 hours each time.

**THEMATIC DESIGNS:** Visitors to TBG enjoy iris plantings organized by theme such as color and color harmonies. Adam intends to emphasize theme planting in future installations and is currently researching iris with musical names. Other themes can be chosen as PAIS has done in the Yavapai College Sculpture Garden featuring iris beds of Dykes Medal Winners, AZ Hybridizers, the Storybook Garden, etc.

**SHADE:** All plants, even sun lovers, appreciate an afternoon shade respite from our intense, hot, desert sun. Adam plans the TBG iris beds with this in mind, using dappled light from lacy tree canopies, too.

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# GROWING IRIS IN DESERT CLIMATES (CONT.)

## Tucson Botanical Garden Iris

Photo Courtesy of Tucson Area Iris Society



Iris 'Melodies', a Gordon Jensen hybrid in his Tucson area garden  
Photo Courtesy of Gordon Jensen



Tucson Botanical Garden Iris border ~ SOURCE: Gene Spesard (Flickr)

COMPANION PLANTINGS: Since TBG is a public garden, the iris borders need to be attractive year round even when the iris are dormant. Adam's approach to this design challenge is adding companion plants such as spring blooming bulbs (daffodils, tulips, etc.); native plants like verbena and yarrow; along with plants that bloom before, with, and after the iris (bluebells, columbine, blue flax, poppies, etc.)



Adam suggests breaking conventions and staid garden rules...*Experiment!* Keep in mind the root zones of different plants, so they don't compete with each other or your iris. For our personal gardens, we can plant iris with peonies

and roses, lilacs and flowering quince...whatever may appeal to us.  
*Have fun!*

## Local Prescott Iris border

SOURCE: Cynthe Brush





# SEPT & OCT HAPPENINGS

## AIS Webinar: Species IRIS



Iris stolonifera: CT Johansson  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org>

Iris albicans: Cynthe Brush



## Final Session!! 2020 AIS Summer Series Zoom Webinars: Register NOW!

The American Iris Society invites you to our final Zoom Webinar:  
**When:** Sep 2, 2020 5:30pm Pacific Time (US and Canada)  
**Topic:** 'Species Irises' ~ Jody Nolin (including Judges Training)

This webinar will familiarize the non-judge with this group of irises and help judges with the challenges of this diverse group. Species and species crosses are the widest set of irises of any chapter in the Judges manual. The session focuses on types commonly seen by the judge, either in the garden or on the show bench. It will count as one hour of judges training.

**Please register in advance:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN\\_RIDO-1E4QUCCj0NrR0iVwg](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_RIDO-1E4QUCCj0NrR0iVwg)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information on how to join the webinar.



Iris bismarckiana  
 Source: Alastair Rae  
 London UK

## The Daily Iris Puzzle Continues

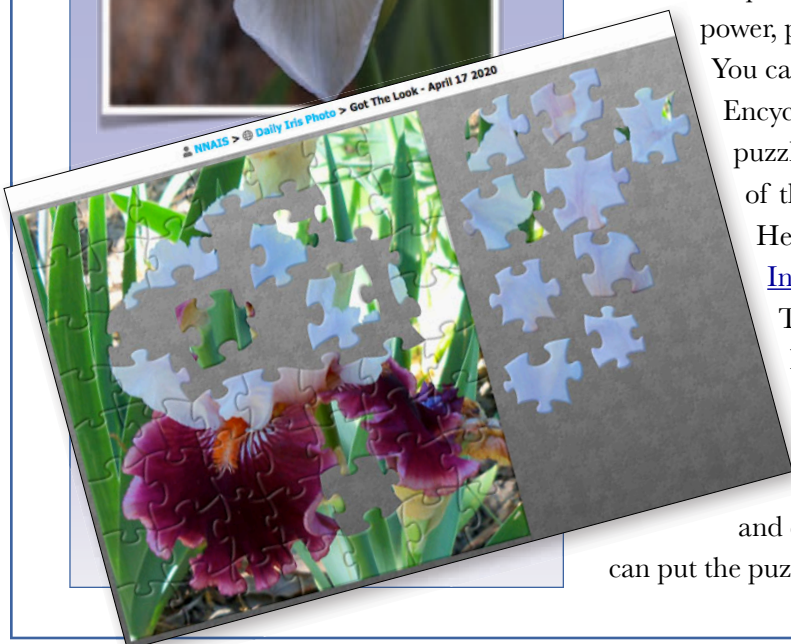
Thank you everyone for your concern when the *Daily Iris Puzzle* unexpectedly paused for a few days. The derecho took out our power, phone, and internet; otherwise we did well.

You can continue to find the *Daily Iris Puzzle* on the Iris Encyclopedia with standard difficulty and harder difficulty puzzles. And on Saturdays find an additional Super Hard version of the garden picture - 300 pieces, the most they offer.

Here's the link: <https://wiki.irises.org/Main/InfoDailyIrisPuzzle>

Thank you to everyone for your gardens and irises photos. Please keep them coming; send to Wayne Messer [wrmesser@gmail.com](mailto:wrmesser@gmail.com)

**WARNING!** For puzzlers this is tons of fun, irresistible, and distracting. The game also has a timer to see how fast you can put the puzzles together. Don't peek, if you don't have time to play.



# AIS NATIONAL CONVENTION 2021



Excellent garden tours are being planned for convention participants. A fascinating area of the country, there are lots of places to visit if you decide to attend. AIS link: [www.Irises.org/aismembers/iris-enchantment/#irisenchantvideo](http://www.Irises.org/aismembers/iris-enchantment/#irisenchantvideo)  
 NOTE: This is a long-ish video @ 24 minutes, so plan to watch when you have time to enjoy it.



## AIS Fundraiser: REMEMBER Brent & Becky's Bulbs?

A few years ago, the AIS promoted a program as a Society fundraiser if our members purchased plants and bulbs from **Brent & Becky's Bulbs** of Gloucester, VA. Well, we are still doing it! If you make a purchase from Brent & Becky's AND ... include in the Comments section of the order form that you want your purchase to benefit the American Iris Society ...THE AIS WILL RECEIVE A CHECK FOR 25% OF YOUR ORDER!!

Fall planting season is September to November. Check out their website at <https://www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com> I've ordered twice this year and they have most everything!!

~ Jill Bonino, AIS Treasurer



# WHAT DID YOU DO THIS SUMMER 2020?

**Bryon and Marilyn Wiley at Bloomer-Rang Iris Farm:** We have been getting out to our iris fields before daylight to get as much done as possible before the sun drives us back in several hours later. Weeding, digging, separating, replanting.

Missing the regular monsoon season. We added a windmill to brighten the farm this year.



**Kathie Mitchell:** This is my favorite iris from the garden this year. Battle Star Atlantis.

**Marge Larson:** We just sold our camping trailer – most of the parks have been closed or restricted. We used it at the National Iris Conventions in Portland, Victoria, and Des Moines. I feel so sad that the 100th convention had to be cancelled this spring. Looking ahead, I'm waiting for my order from Mid-America and Spring bloom. I have never had fall re-bloom!



**Vicki Hughes:** I have certainly enjoyed this first summer of my retirement. My iris did very well this year and I am encouraged to continue adding other plants. I managed to find Columbine plants and they have done well. I planted them in the shade so they wouldn't cook in the Arizona heat. Hoping the seeds will produce next year. While I have made additions to my garden I am still struggling to gain control. I have a beautiful, mature Trumpet Vine (guessing 10~15 years old) that is sending out shoots all over the place. Anyone have advice other than a shovel? Does anyone want a baby Trumpet Vine?

**Cynthe Brush:** Exciting detective work on identifying historic NoID iris found growing on her property continues. Robust rhizomes (2 each) of a beautiful yellow amoena have been sent to three HIPS (Historic Iris Preservation Society) members and historic iris experts: Cathy Egerer, Nancy McDonald, and Mike Unser to grow in their gardens. Hopefully, the iris will bloom in 2021 and these folks will be able to figure out which cultivar it is. In any case, we all feel it's lovely enough to preserve for other historic iris collectors.

