

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to All,

This spring and the bloom season has been a busy time of the year in 2022. Sharon and I have recently returned from a 5,200-mile trip to Missouri, Louisiana, Texas, and finally to Las Cruces, New Mexico for the American Iris Society National Iris Convention and then to San Diego, California for the Region 15 Spring Trek and board meeting all during the month of April and returning home for the Bloomer-Rang garden tour and potluck.

The first week in May we were asked to give three sculpture garden tours. Each tour lasted about an hour and a half to two hours. It was wonderful to see the interest of all that attended and to teach about iris in the process. The first tour was for the Valley of the Sun Gardeners from Phoenix, the second was for the Yavapai County Master Gardeners, and the third was for the OLLI Group at Yavapai College. We were joined in the presentation by Rhonda Gawthrop of the Yavapai College Art Gallery who spoke about the sculptures in the garden. A fun time was had by all. It was wonderful to hear all the kudos and thank yous we received on the tours for what PAIS has accomplished in our public gardens. I would like to THANK all the members of PAIS who have volunteered now and over the years to keep our gardens beautiful for the public to enjoy.

Our recent online potted iris sale was a success thanks to Brenda Griffin and her team. As we look at our upcoming summer schedule, we will be looking at cleanup in our public gardens, date to be determined, our marking party on July 23, location to be determined and our in-person rhizome sale at Stoneridge. From July through September, we will be working in the sculpture garden amending and adding the themed irises which we have been collecting since last year. The sculpture garden will be spectacular next year.

Happy gardening,

Dennis Luebkin



## NEWSLETTER

### JUNE 2022

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Welcome to our newest PAIS members --

Charles Steen

Dottie Moss

### CONTACTS

President: Dennis Luebkin

1st Vice President: Marty Boxer

2nd Vice President: Vicki Hughes

Secretary: Jeri Conklin

Treasurer: Sherry Williams

Director at Large:

Kathleen Shaffer

Membership: Robin Walter

Publicity: Dennis Luebkin,

Sandra Schilling

Community Gardens: Dennis Luebkin ,

Kathleen Shaffer, Diane Thornbrugh

Hospitality: Deb Wade, Vicki Hughes

Newsletter: Jean Brennan

Guardian Gardens Coordinator:

Brenda Griffin

[https://www.facebook.com/  
groups/1048378225226372](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1048378225226372)

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### Meeting Location:

Stoneridge Community Center

1300 Stoneridge Drive,

Prescott Valley

Prescott Area Iris Society

P. O. Box 11918

Prescott, AZ 86304

# Crown of Spring

## The Prescott Area Iris Society Brings Us 3,000 years of Beauty

*by Abby Brill*

I love to write pieces about things more people should know about and enjoy. About five years ago my husband and I discovered the stunning and extensive iris plantings at the Yavapai College Sculpture Garden, next to the Performing Arts Center. These gorgeous and fragrant flowers bloom for about a month every spring, and we now make a point to visit as often as possible every year during that time. To my amazement there are many Prescott folks who have lived here much longer than we who are as yet unaware of this luscious experience, so easily accessible and cost-free, and we have brought many friends to walk through the garden with us.

I reached out to the Prescott Area Iris Society and its president, Dennis Luebkin. He, his wife Sharon and Judy Book, a longtime member, met me at the garden for an informative walkthrough.

Iris people are very passionate about them. We all like tulips and daffodils, but for some reason the iris evokes a swoon from just about everyone I know. Egyptian pharaohs had the iris carved into their scepters, and the French *fleur de lis* is actually an iris. We can thank the PAIS for the three public iris gardens in Prescott: the Yavapai College garden, the Interfaith Meditation Walkway and Gardens honoring the 19 fallen Hotshots and all firefighters at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and the Historical Iris garden at Sharlot Hall Museum.

Founded in 2002, [PAIS](#) now has about 100 members who help maintain these sites, create new beds and hold iris sales twice annually. The society publishes a very informative newsletter and hosts expert iris speakers on a regular basis. Dennis pointed out that the main focus of PAIS has been these public gardens. “The best way to encourage people to plant iris is not by having meetings, but by having a public garden where they can see how beautiful iris are.”

The iris plant originated in the Middle East and coastal Mediterranean. Around 3,000 years ago a pharaoh traveled to what is now Syria and brought some iris rhizomes back to Egypt, and the Egyptians incorporated the flower into their imagery. Because the rhizomes are dry and can survive out of soil for some time, they were carried to distant lands, where they adapted and thrived.

In the 1500s botanists began cataloguing them in Europe and the Middle East. The irises we see today are crosses between the Mediterranean/Asiatic and German varieties. Irises are very hardy and drought-tolerant, as we who have them in our yards but largely neglect them know. Javelinas will devour tulip bulbs, but do not care for the taste of the iris. Dennis shares the useful tip that you can plant tulips with iris and those diggy-piggies won't bother them.

The place to see the most iris here in town is the YC Sculpture Garden in May. The four-acre garden is expanding, so we can look forward to even more iris joy! There are many beds dedicated to irises created by Arizona hybridizers like Francelle Edwards, Margie Valenzuela and Don Shephard. There is a Western-themed iris bed, a black-iris bed, and a Children's Storybook bed, among others. The largest bed features American Iris Society award-winning irises going back to 1927.

At times PAIS comes up with a new theme and acquires new rhizomes to fit the theme from among the over 60,000 registered iris varieties. It must be fun to search for irises with names that fit a specific theme. The irises planted at Embry-Riddle all have names that point to fire, firefighting or heroism.

## Crown of Spring (con't)

Also very interesting to explore is the Historic Iris Garden at Sharlot Hall Museum. The earliest iris type there dates from 1493, and all the pedigrees date from before Sharlot Hall died in 1943. The site also has many iris from early hybridizer Grace Sturtevant, a contemporary of Sharlot Hall and one of the earliest women in the field.

Beyond working in the gardens, amending the soil and dividing the rhizomes, PAIS members hold two sales each year. In early May they offer potted irises, an event held online last year due to Covid and will be online again this year. At the end of July there will be a rhizome sale at the Stoneridge Community Center. Dennis said this sale is very well attended and interested buyers should arrive early. Proceeds from these sales go toward scholarships for the Yavapai College horticulture programs in Chino Valley and Cottonwood. PAIS also pays students to work in the gardens.

Visiting these public iris gardens could become a high point in your enjoyment of spring. Both the YC and Embry-Riddle gardens are free to visit; Sharlot Hall Museum charges a small fee to access the entire property, including the iris garden, which is next to the Fremont House.

For information about the Prescott Area Iris Society or to learn more about irises or upcoming iris sales, visit [prescottirissociety.org](http://prescottirissociety.org).

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### MEMBER PHOTOS!



GARY MILLER



# Member Photos!

New Found Glory  
Bryon Wiley



Gary Miller



Arilbred Iris "Omar's  
Stichery"



Sandra Schilling



Louisiana Iris "Optical  
Illusion "



## PAIS Rhizome Sale

With our iris blooms coming to an end for the 2022 season, ***it's time to begin planning for our Rhizome Sale***. For those of us with clumps of iris just about to 'burst at the seams', July is the usual time of year to dig up the clumps and separate the rhizomes. *Iris clumps should be thinned about every 3 or 4 years to reduce overcrowding and allow for better growth and blooms the next year.* Many of us in PAIS donate our extra rhizome increases to our annual Rhizome Sale. This is generally our largest fundraising event for our several community charitable and scholarship projects.

***In addition to our own members' gardens, we will be digging rhizomes from our 3 community gardens*** in 1) the Richard Marcusen Sculpture Garden at the Yavapai College Prescott Campus, 2) the Granite Mountain Hot Shots Memorial Garden at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and 3) the gardens at Sharlot Hall Museum. We will be needing member volunteers to help with digging at each garden and will have a volunteer sign-up sheet for each garden at the membership meeting on June 18.

If you have iris clumps that need to be thinned and the task is a bit much for you this year, let us know. We will attempt to get volunteers to help you. If you need help, call Bill Walter at (928) 515-2972 and leave a message briefly describing the help you need and he will call you back.

When digging iris clumps, *it is best to dig up the entire clump*, rather than attempting to divide some rhizomes still in the ground, and then replant the rhizomes you want to keep in that same spot or replant elsewhere:

- 1) Be sure each iris clump has finished blooming before July. It should have finished at least 3 or 4 weeks earlier **(April, May, or early June). If still in bloom, don't dig it up.**
- 2) Dig from the outside of the clump inward.
- 3) After digging, break apart the individual rhizomes. Discard those that are soft (rotten) or unhealthy looking or have no leaf fans. Also discard rhizomes that have an old bloom stalk, as those will never bloom again. Remove dried/ **dead leaves. "Discard" means throw away; to avoid undesirable pathogens, do not** throw into your compost.
- 4) Wash the dirt off with plain water, followed by a final rinse with up to 10% solution of bleach OR hydrogen peroxide in water (not both, to avoid noxious gases). Limit soaking in bleach solution to 5 to 10 minutes. Hydrogen peroxide solution can soak longer, as it contains an extra oxygen atom (H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>). Rinse well and dry thoroughly in sun or shade.
- 5) For rhizomes you are donating to the Rhizome Sale, use a permanent marker to write the name (only if known) of the variety on the center leaf of each rhizome and store each variety in a separate paper bag (or container) with **your name on the outside of the bag. A plastic bag will not "breathe" like paper and can induce rotting. If the name is unknown, but you know the color or colors or other distinguishing features, you can write descriptive info on the center leaf (and other leaves). Note that even a 'permanent' marker will fade and disappear exposed to the sun for more than a few weeks.**
- 6) ***Bring your rhizome donations to the Marking Party beginning 8:00 am at Brenda Griffin's home, 2060 N Mohave, in Chino Valley, Saturday, July 23.*** If you are not able to attend the Marking Party, you can take your rhizomes to **Sherry Williams' home (6571 E Dalton Way) in Prescott Valley or to Dennis Luebkin's home (10 Cienega Drive) in Prescott before July 23.** If no one is home, leave your bags or containers of rhizomes near the front door. Be sure your rhizomes are identified, preferably on the center leaf, if known, and write your name on each bag or container. **If you haven't been to a Marking Party, we will show you how to properly trim and price the rhizomes for the Rhizome Sale.** Food will be provided, and merriment will be had by all!
- 7) On Friday, July 29, ***we will be setting up for the Rhizome Sale*** beginning at 10 am at our usual meeting place – Stoneridge Community Center, 1300 Stoneridge Drive in Prescott Valley. We need volunteers to set up tables, chairs, other equipment, and, of course, the rhizomes boxed from the Making Party to sell. ***The Rhizome Sale will be the following day, Saturday, July 30, and the public is invited.***

For more information, see pages 16 – 21 in the PAIS 2022 Handbook.



Sandra Schilling



Marge Larson



Kristeen Wood



## Gardening Tips for Summer Iris Care Dennis Luebkin

Here we are at the end of spring with summer and warm temperatures quickly approaching. It has been a warm **dry spring and blooms are beginning to fade. This year's predictions are for an above average monsoon season** which we desperately need. As the bloom comes to an end it is time to think about what we need to do in our iris gardens. This is the time of year when iris go from vigorous growth and bloom to a state of semi dormancy. Iris spends most of their energy producing bloom and then need a period of rest to reenergize.

Digging and Planting: Go to the PAIS website <http://prescottirissociety.org> to view the **"How to Grow Irises in the Tri City Area."** Iris will need about 30 to 45 days of rest before digging and dividing. Here in Prescott that means it will be the beginning to the middle of July. The best time to dig and separate your iris is during the monsoon season when the weather is more moderate, and the humidity is higher. If you are digging and dividing rhizomes for the summer iris sale, it is best to dig them in the middle of July. When replanting your rhizomes, if they have been out of the ground for a while and are looking dry, soak them for 3 to 4 hours in a bucket of water. You can also add some vitamin B1 in the water to rehydrate them before planting. Based on your soil condition, amend your soils with All Purpose Soil Conditioner and Seed Cover (or similar product) and alfalfa meal while digging and replanting.

Cleaning: Remove dead fans and old spent bloom stalks. Also clean any leaf debris from around the rhizomes and remove any soil from the tops of the rhizomes. Leave about the top 1/4 to 1/3 of the rhizome exposed. Remember the rhizomes like some light and air. This will also help prevent rhizome rot. If you should notice any soft rhizomes during cleanup or detect a rotten odor, you can apply some Ajax or similar chlorinated cleaner on top and around the rhizome. The chlorine will assist in killing the bacteria causing the rot. Weeds and grasses are a problem after our summer monsoon. Remove weeds and grasses so they do not compete with the irises.

Fertilizing: If you have reblooming irises and have not dug or separated them, you can fertilize them during the monsoon season. This will help them re-bloom in the fall. A good 10-10-10 general garden fertilizer with other trace elements and minerals such as iron, calcium, magnesium, sulfur, boron, manganese, copper, zinc also is helpful for the overall health of the irises. Irises are heavy feeders. Nitrogen promotes good overall growth and green fans. Phosphorus and potassium help in the development of a strong root system, resist disease, and produce abundant bloom for re-bloomers and for the following spring.

Pest control: Thrips and aphids lay their eggs at the base of the fans so be sure to clean out the dead fans and leaf debris.

Watering: With the warm dry summer ahead prior to the monsoon season, continue watering twice a week to establish newly planted rhizomes and then begin to cut back on the watering to once weekly. If we have a good monsoon season you may only need to water only occasionally. If the ground begins to look dry, check three inches below the ground to see how moist the ground is and if it is dry, water with a deep soaking. Happy gardening!!



**Our June meeting is on the 18<sup>th</sup> at the Stoneridge Community Center starting at 1:30 PM.**

This is going to be a fun packed meeting! We are having our ice cream social, so make sure you're hungry for ice cream and wonderful toppings. Remember, "Without ice cream, there would be darkness and chaos."



We are also having our Photo Contest. We sent an email to everyone with the rules, so make sure you bring all of your wonderful photos. Contest rules are on page 10. There are wonderful prizes so it's worth a shot. You are the judges for the photos, and everyone will get a tally sheet to give their votes. Votes will be tallied by a couple of our amazing members.



Our speaker is our own ***Kellie Smith***.

The topic is '**Home and Garden Critters**'.

This should be an interesting and informative talk that most of us will benefit from. (It may actually make our lives more comfortable.)

## 13th Annual Photo Contest

June 18th, 2022

It's photo time! Well, it's three months earlier than in previous years, but as past September meetings have been very busy with the photo contest, silent auction, ice cream social and a guest speaker, it was suggested and voted on by the committee that we have 'photos and ice cream' in June! So, get those cameras - in whatever form they take - clicking!

Only PAIS members are eligible to enter. Photos can be taken anywhere, anytime but must be taken by the entrant.

**Entrants will need to have their 8" x 10" photos printed.**

Drug stores are a good place to have your photos printed.

You can enter up to three photos, in each of four categories, which are...

*Category A:* Habitat – Iris landscape or iris scene

*Category B:* Individual iris – single or cluster of same iris

*Category C:* Artistic – Macro and/or photoshopped enhancement of iris

*Category D:* Irises & Others – irises with insects, animals, people...any or all, your choice

Entrants, please come to the 'Contest Registration' table to submit your photo(s), to which you have added on the back, your name, and the category you are entering it in. Soft pencil or a sticky note will do, just so it's legible.

No photographer's name will be on display as it is a 'popular choice' contest. Everyone who comes to the meeting will be given a voting slip and choose their favorite photo in each category. After voting is finished, there will be a tallying by our very own 'mathematicians' and winners and runners up in all categories will be announced, and prizes will be awarded. We will have \$40 gift vouchers from Mortimer Nursery for 1<sup>st</sup> place winners & various prizes for runners up.

Robin Walter





## Potluck Lunch at Bloomer-Rang Iris Farm

On Friday April 29<sup>th</sup>, 21 merry wanderers from PAIS drove the 25 miles to Wilhoit, Az to enjoy great food, friendship and the irises at the Wiley's Bloomer-Rang Iris Farm. Unfortunately, Marilyn's farm was hit by a late frost with two nights of below freezing temperatures which took out most of the early season bloom throughout the Prescott area. Even at her lower and warmer elevation she too had little to show. The good news is that good food and good friends made up for the lack of bloom. Marilyn and Bryon had long tables set with antique plates from her mother.

Middle and late season bloom was not affected by the freeze and should be beautiful. We left for home with full tummies and smiles on our faces. Left over sub-sandwiches found their way to members Kathleen and TG Shaffer. Kathleen had just had knee surgery and TG had three broken ribs. A big "thank you" from TG and Kathleen for the meal.





## PAIS Iris Hybridizing Class

Brenda's Joy Iris ~ 5-14-22

Gary Miller mentioned to Brenda Griffin that he'd be willing to teach an iris hybridizing class, at her iris garden if PAIS could get enough interested members to come. Brenda announced the class on the PAIS Facebook page and several of us were very enthused about the opportunity!

We met at 8:30am on a lovely warm Saturday morning to learn the nuances of **iris 'sex' in the garden. Besides Gary and Brenda, Gary's son Tim M., PAIS members: Charles S., Sandra S., Olga Z. (a friend of Brenda's), and Cynthe B.** were there. Gathered under the gazebo, Gary taught our small group of curious iris growers how to hybridize iris.

Gary began the class by discussing iris flower anatomy. He took apart an iris bloom, naming the major parts: **the falls** (three petals that droop down) - **the standards** (three petals that stand up) - revealing the **rounded ovary** at the top of the stem - topped by three frilly, short, petal-like upright **style arms** behind the iris beard and arching over it - sheltering a delicate, **narrowly spoon-shaped anther** in the curve of the styles. The style arms have a small moist lip, **the stigma**, below their frilly crests.

RESOURCE - To see the labeled anatomy of an iris, check this link:

[https://www.leonineiris.com/l9ie\\_partsoftheirisflower.php](https://www.leonineiris.com/l9ie_partsoftheirisflower.php)

We learned pollen is developed on the anther (not on the beard as I thought) and the pollen-receptive portion of the iris is a thin, moist lip just under the top, frilly edge of the styles.

To pollinate an iris successfully requires transferring fresh pollen from a newly opened flower gathered gently with a toothpick (or other tool or a plucked anther) and rubbing it on the moist upper back of the three style lips.

(Technically, only one style has to be pollinated, but you improve your chances of success, if you do all three. And, theoretically, only one pollen grain needs to **adhere to the style lip, but more is better!**) **The ovary parent is the 'mother.'** **The pollen parent is the 'father.'**

## **PAIS Iris Hybridizing Class (con't)**

Brenda invited us out into her garden to select iris we wanted to cross.

- Sandra was first and crossed pollen from a gorgeous lavender white spaceage iris 'Brave New World' with TB 'Brown Lasso.'
- Tim's cross was TB 'Always and Forever' with pollen from TB 'Not a Clue.'
- Olga, of Ukrainian heritage, hopes to create an iris with blue standards and yellow falls in the colors of her country's flag. So she selected pollen from TB 'Nestucca Rapids' and crossed space-age TB 'Abby and Me.'
- Charles got busy and did three crosses: 1. TB 'Care To Dance' x TB 'Upper Crust' 2. TB 'Owyhee Desert' x TB 'Caramel N Chocolate' and finally 3. Charles used pollen from TB 'Caramel N Chocolate' on TB 'Owyhee Desert.'
- Brenda took pollen from TB 'Zip Zing Zowie' onto TB 'Haunted Heart.'
- I was busy taking iris photos, but finally decided on crossing a lovely historic iris TB 'Mary Randall' with pollen from TB 'Owyhee Desert.' I'm hopeful the cross will 'take' as I could see the pollen laying on the moist style lip.

Brenda's going to keep an eye on all the tagged iris we crossed and let us know if they develop seed pods. Am eager to see if perhaps our class's efforts will birth some wonderful Arizona high country iris cultivars in the next few years? We'll keep you posted!

Article by Cynthe Brush



Valley of the Sun Gardeners



Yavapai Master Gardeners



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

JUNE 1: DIANA CHAPMAN  
JUNE 3: SHERRY WILLIAMS  
JUNE 13: JANET CHABOLLA  
JUNE 13: JANICE WARREN  
JUNE 17: BARBIE HARLIB  
JUNE 17: GARY MILLER  
JUNE 17: MICHELLE SNYDER  
JUNE 23: BARBARA KYTE  
JUNE 23: ELISE BEATTY  
JUNE 26: TOM ZIFFER



JULY 7: LYLE MAXEY  
JULY 11: YVONNE MORLAN  
JULY 14: JOHN BERNARDI  
JULY 23: PAUL COYNE

AUG 2: LINDA DAVIS  
AUG 2: SHARON LUEBKIN  
AUG 3: NANCY FLOYD  
AUG 23: KATHIE MITCHELL  
AUG 23: RON MITCHELL  
AUG 29: KELLIE SMITH  
AUG 29: GERRY SNYDER

SEP 11: KRIS WOOD  
SEP 14: MARILYN WILEY  
SEP 20: JERRY CONKLIN  
SEP 23: JOANNE MOORHOUSE  
SEP 24: REV. JEAN HOLMES  
SEP 26: LANE KIHLSSTROM  
SEP 26: BARB MEYER