

- *Iris Rhizome Sale*
- *2015 A.I.S. Convention Garden Tours*
- *My First Iris Experience*



Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin

IRIS AUSTIN



No meetings in July and August

Next scheduled meeting:

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

6:45 P.M. Gate closes at 7 P.M.

Annual Rhizome Sale

September 12, 2015

A.I.S. / Region 17 Annual Meeting

When: August 14-15, 2015

Where:

Crowne Plaza Hotel

Addison, 14315 Midway Rd.

Addison, TX 75001

Hotel room reservations are separate from Registration.

Room rate is \$90.00 + tax/night for 1-4 people, guaranteed until July 24, 2015.

The Registration Form for the meeting can be downloaded from our website.

IRIS RHIZOME SALE SEPTEMBER 12

Bearded irises are exotic unique colorful flowers that have caterpillar-like beards that can range from solid yellow or orange to tri-colors in today's newest hybrids. If 'Persian Berry,' 'Thai Orange,' 'Glitter Gulch,' or 'Thornbird' beckoned to your artistic imagination on April 11 during the 25th accredited show at Zilker Botanical Garden or if you toured the stunning Portland, Oregon Gardens May 18-23 you became a true fan of these religious symbols having three standards raised heavenward and three petals or falls curved downward toward earth. These beautiful flowers, however, can have unusual appendages on the beards such as horns, spoons, flounces, or even carnation-like puffs making them space agers or novelty irises. All of them are grown from fleshy stems called rhizomes that the Iris Society of Austin will be selling **Saturday, September 12, at the Norris Conference Center, 2525 W. Anderson Lane off MoPac Expressway 1 near Walmart.** The sale begins at 9 A.M. and usually ends at 2 P.M. when most of the rhizomes are sold because of their popularity as an attractive plant with fan-shaped leaves that require very little water.

Other rhizomes that will be available will be the native wildflowers of America called Louisiana irises, which are equally as beautiful since they grow at the edge of a pond, in a water feature, or in a low place in a garden that stays damp and has acid soil. The flowers range in color from true red to purple. Their blooms are their greatest asset and can range in diversity from semi-flaring to flat, from open to pendant, from full-overlapping to ruffled. While their leaves are narrow, they contain specks like pepper when held up to the light. After all, they come from Louisiana.

Spurias go dormant during the summer heat, but their wiry rhizomes come back to life with great vigor when the weather becomes cooler in Central Texas. The flowers on these tall irises with very slender green foliage are truly amazing resembling the Dutch irises grown from bulbs, but with an exotic flavor all of their own. These rhizomes do not need to be dug up and divided for many years. They also need no extra water during their dormancy. Water and feed heavily with rose food when they begin to show foliage in the fall.

All of these will extend the bloom time of irises, create interest, add texture, and make any garden a true place of beauty. — Nelda Moore



"Iris in Wonderland 2015"

A.I.S. Convention Garden Tours
by Ken Fuchs

On Thursday, our bus took the South Route to **Schreiner's Iris Gardens** in Salem and Mid-America Garden in Brooks. Thunderstorms were predicted for Thursday, with more rain on Friday and Saturday. There was a brief shower during the drive to Salem, but then it stopped and we were enchanted by an enormous rainbow in the western sky. It was a good omen of things to come. It cleared off and we had brilliant sunshine the rest of the day. As we approached our first stop, our eyes were dazzled by acres and acres of irises in full bloom. Across the street



from the entrance to Schreiner's were more acres of crimson clover. There was color everywhere. Steve Schreiner greeted us in the large 10-acre display garden which contained a master planting of 100 Beardless official guest irises and over 400 Bearded official guest irises. A variety of companion plants, especially very tall lupines, and different flowering trees added a myriad of colors to the gardens. Large clumps of single cultivars in the different pathways separated individual beds. One highlight was three beds which contained all of the Dykes Medal winners.

Leaving Schreiner's, we stopped at the nearby **Adelman Peony Gardens** and strolled through their delightful display garden filled with a vast array of many-colored peonies. We enjoyed boxed lunches in a large white tent set up next to the Adelman's parking lot.



Thomas Johnson greeted us when we arrived at Sebright Gardens, which adjoins the 17-acre **Mid-America Garden** on gently rolling hills. Here was another master planting in five or six acres of guest irises. Besides irises, Thomas Johnson and his partner Kirk Hansen have a large nursery that specializes in a wide variety of hostas. Three acres of display gardens containing rare and unusual trees and shrubs surround their house. Besides gardening, Thomas also breeds exotic bantam chickens and peacocks, which could be viewed below the house.

Friday's bus tours followed the North Route, taking us first to Chad Harris and Dale Grams' **Mt. Pleasant Iris Farm**, situated on a hillside overlooking the Columbia River near Washougal, Washington. It was cool and overcast, and there were brief, on-and-off-again light showers. The view from Chad and Dale's home was absolutely breathtaking, with the various garden beds and the master planting on the sloping hillside below the house and the Vista House atop a 600-foot cliff on the opposite side of the river in the distance.



Chad Harris is the current president of the Greater Portland Iris Society and he eagerly answered questions about hybridizing *Pseudatas*, *Laevigatas*, and bearded irises. Seven artesian springs on the farm provide an endless abundance of water which

allows daily watering of the beardless iris beds.

Leaving Mt. Pleasant Iris Farm, we drove back along the Columbia to Vancouver (located directly across the river from Portland) to historic Fort Vancouver, where we had lunch in the Artillery Barracks, built in 1904. Then we drove a couple of miles to Terry and Barbara Aitken's **Salmon Creek Garden**, which he describes as "a five-acre filing cabinet with irises planted by category and alphabetically." Like Mid-America Garden, the Aitkens' gardens are also located on rolling hillsides, so a stroll



through the grounds brought into view a whole new section of colorful beds not visible moments before. Beside the Aitkens' home is a greenhouse filled with a wide variety of exotic orchids.

Saturday, our final day of Garden Tours, took us on the East Route. We drove for miles through heavy forest lands and saw "Christmas tree" farms everywhere on both sides of the road. It was very overcast, and the ponchos provided in our Convention packets came in handy when we reached Will Plotner's **Wildwood Gardens** in Molalla. This garden was rather small in comparison with the other gardens, and there was not a lot of bloom. Because of the previous rains, we had to carefully stay on the walkways beside the gardens to avoid mud. The



overall rural setting was relaxing and we enjoyed watching the dairy cows in the large pasture across the road.

Upon leaving Wildwood Gardens, we drove to Canby Grove Christian Center, a magnificent camp located in the midst of enormous fir trees in Canby. We had build-your-own grilled chicken sandwiches with green salad and cheesecake for dessert, all served homestyle by very polite young people. Outside the dining hall was a blazing firepit and we were offered freshly-made S'mores and some visitors roasted marshmallows. There was a very cozy camp atmosphere as everyone enjoyed the fire while waiting for the buses to depart.

Iris at our last stop were perhaps the most spectacular. Lynda and Roger Miller's Manor Gardens in Canby had row after row of gigantic iris plants with enormous fans and blooms in the area facing the road. There were more

guest gardens behind their home. They are also a commercial garden and their greenhouses and adjoining display-sale areas were filled with many



varieties of potted plants and shrubs. Their own private gardens beside and behind the house provided inviting walkways decorated with more flowers and shrubs.

The 2015 Convention concluded Saturday evening with the Awards Banquet. While everyone was scrambling for tables, ISA members helped set out badges for the 2016 Convention in Newark, New Jersey, beside all of the 600+ table settings in

the enormous dining room. After the inner, Keith Keppel, Thomas Johnson, and Lynda Miller won numerous awards. Paul Gossett received a Lifetime Achievement Award for his ongoing service since 1982 as A.I.S. Liaison. He was not able to attend the Convention for health reasons, and Judy Keisling and Bonnie Nichols accepted on his behalf. Charles Bunnell received the 2014 Dykes Medal for his MTB 'Dividing Line.' For Iris Society of Austin members the highlight of the evening was the drawing for the Raffle Quilt, which was won by our own Dara Smith. For all who attended, the 2015 A.I.S. Convention will linger in our memories as a very special event filled with friendly people, breathtaking forests and scenery, fantastic gardens, countless irises.

My First Iris Experience – Carolyn Wylie:

I was a small child in Monahans (in West Texas), probably in the late 1940's. There were irises in our back yard. I have always thought of them as my mother's flowers, but I don't really know which parent planted them. There were purple ones and white ones, presumably the "cemetery whites" and early purples that bloom at the same time.

The irises were beautiful, and they bloomed every year. I remember them being there throughout my childhood. I didn't know there were irises with names and in other colors until much later — probably in the late 1950's or early 1960's, when I found out my aunt in Cuero had a lot of different irises. (We normally visited here only in midsummer, when irises wouldn't have been blooming.) The first irises I grew myself were a gift from a friend in about 1975 — purple, early-blooming, no idea of the name. A year or two after that I saw an ad from Cooley's Gardens in a magazine, sent off for the Five Irises of the Year and a catalog, and fell in love with everything in it. The one I liked best in my first catalog order was Babbling Brook (blue).



My First Iris Experience – Nelda Moore:

I was somewhere between 9 and 12 when I found some irises in a catalogue, admired them, and decided to capture them on canvas by using an oil painting set my mother had purchased for me. This is still one of the best iris paintings that I have done and it had a lavender iris. Then I was given a white flag that I planted. It multiplied over the years until it reached the other end of the back of the garage. These South Texas irises did not need bone meal. They flourished on existing soil and rainwater and bloomed every year without fail.

When I was a teacher and building representative, I arranged some of these irises for the school and most flower enthusiasts thought that I had purchased them from a flower shop.

My grandmother and mother always had plenty of flowers that cost pennies since they came from cuttings from family or seeds from packets under a dollar back then. We tried new flowers as if we had a botanical garden. One year we planted a flower called statice or sea lavender--an everlasting flower. I took a bouquet for my desk. The students never believed that they were real! They are paper!

We loved gardening and farming.

Flowers were for sharing and giving; vegetables were for survival and selling.

MINUTES OF THE IRIS SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

May 12, 2015

The meeting was called to order and presided by Pat Byrne. The minutes from the April 2015 meeting were approved as published in the May newsletter. Welcome to new members Bill Tamminga and Denis and Linda Hartford who joined at our show.

Treasurer's Report:

The ending monthly balance for April 2015 was \$17,656.94. The current balance on May 12 is \$17,015.79. Recent expenses include new member dues, judges' compensation and ZGF water supplies.

AAGC Council Report:

All members need to tell Marney to record any volunteer hours for time put in for ZGF. There are many more Spring events upcoming: May 13, Bonsai Meeting, May 23 - Daylily Show. Preliminary estimates are that the ZGF made \$45,000.00!! When loading and unloading at the front curb please do not block the entrance for emergency vehicles. AAGC dues are due and Marney will be paying for the ISA. The AAGC is now looking to fill the vacancy for a Treasurer. The Fall Plant Sale will be Saturday September 26 here at Zilker.

Austin Iris Club business:

1. Installation of the 2015 – 2016 ISA officers:

President - Pat Byrne,

Programs – Donna Little,

Membership – Jaime Hadley,

Secretary – Dara E. Smith,

Treasurer – Marney Abel,

Historian – Tracey Rogers.

2. RE: New garden beds for the move of the irises from the rose garden up to the area in the front that borders Barton Springs Road. Don Freeman and our new member Bill T. presented the drawing/design for preliminary plans of the proposed new iris beds. We would like for the plan to include an ADA trail extending from the herb garden to the area of the iris and daylily beds. Everyone is invited to offer suggestions and ideas to help move the planning forward.

3. Donna Little has started a list to collect ideas from the members on Next Year's Program Suggestions.

4. Shelia Shengas has offered a fun questionnaire for members to share their experiences with Irises. Ken

Fuchs sent the document out in email as well if you would like to send in your response electronically.

5. Nelda Moore – Presentation of the Awards from the ISA 2015 Iris Show.

Silver Medal Certificate – Don and Pat Freeman

Best Other Iris, Louisiana – Don and Pat Freeman

Best Design of Show Cert. – Pat Freeman

Bronze Medal Cert. – Jaime Hadley

Artistic Sweepstakes – Jaime Hadley

Best Specimen of Show (Al's Gal) – Ellen Singleton

Section Medal Certificate for Space Agers –
Ellen Singleton

Historic (Persian Berry TB) – Nelda Moore

Section Medal Certificate Medians – Dara E. Smith

6. Jaime Hadley started a discussion covering things that went well and things that could use improvement from the results of our recent show. In the interest of time, we did not consider any of this discussion during the meeting. We will follow up on this with an agenda item for a meeting in the Fall.

7. We will not meet during the Summer. A motion was made to cancel our summer meetings and the next meeting will be September 8, 2015 to prepare rhizomes for our Fall Sale on September 12, 2015. The motion passed.

8. There was a discussion that was prompted by the success that the Belton club had with their plant sale at the Master Gardener's Convention. The conversation was interesting, but the consensus was that it was too much work for our membership to commit to.

Important Dates:

Region 17 Convention – August 14 – 15, 2015
Addison, TX (Hosted by Dallas IS)

Iris Society of Austin – Next Meeting – Tuesday
September 8, 2015

Iris Society of Austin Rhizome Sale – Saturday
September 12, 2015 at Norris Conference Center

The meeting program presented by Ken Fuchs was a video with highlights from the National Convention that was held in Portland, OR in 2006.

The meeting was adjourned.

Dara E. Smith, Secretary

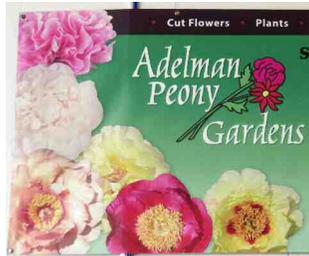


Waiting for the buses to arrive

Garden Tours



The view behind Schreiner's Display Gardens



Lunch in the tent at Adelman's



Paul Black at Mid-America Garden



Hostas for sale



Mid-America Garden



Chad Harris' Mt. Pleasant Iris Farm



Beardless iris bed



Carolyn Wylie relaxes by the water pond.



On the deck at Mt. Pleasant Iris Farm



'Birds in Flight'



Tree-hugging at Fort Vancouver



Aitken's Salmon Creek Garden



Arriving at Will Plotner's Wildwood Gardens



Wildwood Gardens



After lunch at Canby Grove



Miller's Manor Gardens

