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Nelda Moore, Editor

A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin

# IRIS AUSTIN



## next ISA meeting >>>

Iris Society of Austin Meeting  
**Tuesday October 8, 2013**  
**6:45 pm** (gates close at 7:00)  
**Late? call 477-8672 ext 13**

Zilker Garden Center  
 2220 Barton Springs Rd  
 Austin TX 78746

- Potluck Supper
- Video on 2013 Introductions

## next AAGC meeting >>>

Austin Area Garden Council Meeting  
**Tuesday October 8, 2013**  
**9:30 am**  
 Zilker Garden Center  
 Marney Abel – ISA representative

## upcoming events >>>

Nov 12, 2013 – Regular Meeting  
 & Holiday Potluck

**Dec 2013 – No ISA Meeting**

Jan 14, 2014 – Regular Meeting

Feb 11, 2014 – Regular Meeting

Mar 11, 2014 – Regular Meeting

Apr 5-10, 2014 – AIS Nat'l Conv,  
 Dallas

Spring Show date to be discussed at  
 Oct meeting!

## Club Happenings

Our president, Pat Byrne, sends Good Wishes for you and the irises that you planted before the most welcome rain over the last couple of weeks, which we all badly needed.

Pat is doing well and counting her blessings as she regains her strength after a mild stroke that she experienced Sept 4. She is trying to write with the right hand by holding with the left and slowly drawing her signature. Pat has a positive outlook and plans to return to our meetings, but probably not in October since it will be a while before she is able to make the drive. Bob does the driving to get each of them to rehab or exercise programs. Pat is thankful that she was able to drive herself to the hospital to get help very quickly when she felt the attack.

The front iris bed in Zilker Botanical Gardens, near Barton Springs Road, was weeded, cleaned of dried foliage, and planted with some of the newer and brighter irises so that the entire area has been once again filled with rhizomes. The work was done by Don & Pat Freeman, Nelda Moore, and Tracey Rogers on Sept 28, from 8:30 to 11:30am. The newer plantings were not watered because rains were

predicted and ended up coming down heavily Saturday evening and Sunday morning. Tracey reworked the bed diagrams to show where the new irises are located.

A huge Thank You to Nelda Moore who organized the Iris Society's table for the Zilker Garden Open House event Sept 21, and thanks to Tracey R and Jaime H who manned the table from 9am to 1pm handing our information about irises and the society, and giving away free rhizomes left over from the sale. Tracey especially worked hard to create the club brochure and other hand-outs for the visitors. Don & Pat Freeman also worked the event for the other clubs to which they belong, and members of the Smith-Sadler family dropped by to check out all the goings on.

Ellen Singleton poses at the Hensleys' dig



# Region 17 Meeting

August 9 Tracey Rogers and I loaded the Moore Ford at 12:30pm and began our journey to the Radisson Hotel off Interstate 35 W in Fort Worth. We approached Gordon Carver and Pat Byrne in the lobby, where we received our name tags and a huge shoebox, that had been spray-painted and decorated with an iris, before it was filled with items to eat, compost to nourish plants, body cream to refresh ourselves, wildflower seeds to provide beauty to our spring garden, and many other useful items including a tee shirt.

Tracey unpacked "A Guide to Bearded Irises: Cultivating the Rainbow for Beginners and Enthusiasts" by Kelly Norris and I began reading every word - even the descriptions Kelly had under pictures of wonderful irises! Dan Heims from Terra Nova Nursery in Portland praised Kelly for his skills as a hybridizer. At 16 Kelly persuaded his parents to purchase the Rainbow Iris Farm in Bartlett, TX, where many of us gathered to work with irises we purchased for the annual sales.

The banquets were bountiful, the boxed lunch for \$5 was delicious, hospitality was great, and the

entertainment created by Dell Perry provided challenges that created laughter. Try taking one long thin uncooked spaghetti and picking up 5 washers from the edge of the table! Better yet, attempt to reach for a penny in the toes of a new pair of panty hose in about one minute!

On the morning of August 10 Lowell Baumunk provided many pictures of his creations including his landscaped garden that visitors or irisarians see when a convention is held in Colorado, and Dell Perry explained about show ethics. Candy and water was at our table as we jotted notes concerning irises that we wanted from the Stout Garden in Oklahoma.

Later that afternoon Gordon Carver presided during the Region 17 Business Meeting. Ramona Howard provided a detailed treasurer's report. Vicki Howard from Rio Vista became the Youth Chairman while Dana Brown became the Judges' Training Chairman. Jim Landers will remain Historian and will continue to collect newsletters, show reports, winners of shows, and pictures. All of you need to see a picture of the beautiful quilt created for the 2014 American Iris Society

Convention that will again be held in Addison in the same hotel for the same price per room with some new gardens added to those that were on tour in 2013. A reward will be given for the return of Tex Q Arter. The Jim Landers Road Book will be given to each attendee who rides the bus for the tours of iris gardens. This provided humor even for Texans who attended the convention.

During the Saturday night banquet Don and Pat Freeman from Austin received an award from Jim Landers for showing the most irises grown by Texas hybridizers in their blue-ribbon winners.

August 11 Tracey and I ate breakfast in the hotel. Dawn Boyer came down as we were walking to our hotel room for the last time. Since no affiliate in Region 17 stood up to host the Region 17 Convention in 2014, the new Region Vice President is currently reaching out to each president to encourage some group or groups to take on this fun task.



*far left: ISA members help the Hensleys dig irises before their move*  
*left: Nelda Moore checks in and checks out her goodies at the Region 17 meeting*  
*right: Don Freeman picks up pasta with pasta at the Region 17 meeting as other members watch*



## Planting Bearded iris

Bearded irises are very easy to grow with a minimum of care as long as the rhizome has good drainage and the plant has plenty of sun. Any soil should be amended with compost, bone meal, and sand. If the soil is acidic, some agricultural lime can be beneficial. If using fertilizer, the mix should be higher in phosphorous for root growth, solid rhizomes, and strong bloomstalks, and low in nitrogen to prevent rot.

The best time to plant the rhizomes is during the fall especially in September and October here in Texas. They should set their roots before the first freeze in this area.

Plant the rhizome in the raised bed with the thoroughly mixed amendments by creating a mound of dirt in the planting hole and pressing the rhizome down and spreading the roots over the mound. Then fill in and firm the soil around the rhizome,

leaving the soil just slightly over the rhizome with the foliage trimmed in an upside down "V." Usually the rhizome has evidence of a new increase or two. Soak the ground after planting, then allow the soil around the rhizome to become dry before watering again. Most often the top of the rhizome will show itself after watering. That is perfect because if the iris is planted too deep it will not bloom. Soon the new roots should anchor the plant. The increases may produce bloom stalks in the spring, but sometimes it takes a year before blooms appear. Use bone meal or super phosphate to feed the plant again in the spring before bloom season - usually around Valentine's Day.

Keep a clean garden, do not use companion plants that shade the rhizome, and divide clumps in 2-3 years.

## Louisiana Iris

Louisiana irises have a long rhizome with thin foliage that can be held up to the light so that one can see the tiny black flecks scattered throughout the sword-like leaf. The dots seem like pepper, and after all, these plants are from the swamps of Louisiana. This iris ranges in color from blues and purples to white and dark purple to yellow and red. The flowers can be spider-like to doubles with no beards, just signals or patches of yellow on the blossom.

Their rhizomes are planted about an inch or a little deeper in acidic soil that is kept moist. Mulch, but not pine bark, can be used to keep the

rhizomes from drying during the summer or for protecting them from freezing. These plants are heavy feeders; therefore, they need to be fertilized at least three times per year—at planting time, after they bloom, and again in the fall. They like the azalea food or Miracid.

These irises can be grown in pots as long as there is no hole in the bottom of the container. The soil should be near the top so that the plants are not submerged if it rains. To prevent rainwater from standing in the pot, drill a few holes in the sides of the container at the soil line so that water can escape.

Please keep Tracey Rogers in your thoughts and prayers following the passing of her mother earlier this summer.

And also for member Jeanette Steadman who was released from South Austin Hospital at the end of July and is staying with relatives in LaGrange.

### congratulations! >>>

to Jim Landers as he receives news that his new baby of unknown parentage is legitimate!

Jim received the eagerly awaited announcement from the American Iris Society on the last Saturday in July. The text of the announcement reads as follows:

The American Iris Society  
No. 13-198  
Certificate of Registration

This is to certify that the iris clone 'Lady of Lometa' which conforms to the following description:

(Jim Landers, R. 2013). Sdlg. JL1. LA, 38" (96cm), M. S. light lavender, darker veining, tiny White edge; style arms white, yellow and lavender running length of style arm; F. same as standards, yellow line signal; slight fragrance. Parentage unknown.

and for which application for registration was made by Jim Landers, Temple, TX

has been officially entered in the Register and is eligible for introduction.

Date: 5/29/2013, John & Joanne Jones, Registrar - Recorders

# 2013 Rhizome Sale

**THANKS** for all your hard work!

Special thanks to Sonja and Charlie Hensley for thinking of the club when they put their home on the market. Fifty four of the 165 named varieties we had at the sale came from the Hensley's. We will miss them, and we wish them all the best in Tyler. Nine of the 38 known rebloomers that were at the sale came from the Hensley's. I was pleased to discover that Black Mercury is only reported as reblooming in Texas.

For future sales, we should just mark everything as a rebloomer. We started with two tables of rebloomers. By 10:30, we were down to one table and at the end of the day, three varieties were left.

Thanks to Ken and Jaime for the new tablet-based cash registers. That will make things a lot easier for the treasurer in future. We collected \$4,105.10 in cash, checks and credit cards. Thirty five dollars of that was from the raffle of Blue Eyed Baby (Austin 2012) donated by Snowpeak Iris of Lebanon, Oregon. The lucky winner was Steve Carnahan. He and his wife are regular attendees of the sale, so Blue Eyed Baby went to a good home. After expenses, we made a profit of \$2,543.10. That is a little over \$400 more than last year. Expenses were less than last year. There were leftovers, but once again varieties increased by 30. In 2011, we had 107 varieties, in 2012 we had 137, and this year we had 165; and

those numbers don't include the Louisianas donated by Jim Landers and Nelda Moore. Several members took the leftovers home to plant for next year's sale. Some of them may show up for sale at our show in April. Many of the leftovers were due to the fact that we just had a lot of Ida Red's and Thornbird. Blue irises continue to not be very popular. We didn't have as many blue irises left over as last year, but the rebloomers left at the end of the day were all blue.

Thanks to all the volunteers who donated, priced and worked before and at the sale. Thanks to Mike Renfro for taking on the unknowns – he really made sure they were selling! We couldn't have done it without all of you. Thanks to Don and Pat Freeman for all the Burseen rhizomes they brought to the sale. Also thanks to Ellen Singleton, D Boyle and Donna Little for adding to the rebloomer tables. Thanks to the growers from whom we purchased: Snowpeak Iris in Lebanon, OR; Blue J Iris in Alliance, NE; and Rockytop Gardens in Eagleville, TN. All of them were most generous with what they sent us. We only spent \$712.30 on irises this year and 70% of them were sold out by the time we marked the rhizomes to half price. Many of the sold out irises included rebloomers and the 2011 introductions from Rockytop that sold for ten dollars each.

*submitted by Tracey Rogers*

## welcome new members >>

One of the great successes of the Iris Society of Austin's 2013 Annual Rhizome Sale, was the fact that several new members took the opportunity at the sale to join our Society. Please make sure to look for these folks at an upcoming meeting and welcome them to our club.

- Nicole Netherton
- Pete Flynn
- Charlene Johnston
- Shirley Friesen

## farewell to others>>>

Thanks to the Hensleys for letting us dig so many of their irises before selling their home, and best wishes as they move to Tyler. Thanks also to the other folks who helped with the Hensleys' dig in August:

- Marney Abel
- Nelda Moore
- Tracey Rogers
- Jaime Hadley
- Don & Pat Freeman
- Ellen Singleton
- Kathy Petheram
- Dara Smith

*below: Charlie Hensley digs rhizomes to donate to the society*

