



PRESCOTT AREA IRIS SOCIETY

Winter 2007

Editor: Judy Book 776-7217 jbook@cableone.net

Volume 4, Issue 1

IRIS CULTURE FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY IN THE PRESCOTT AREA

Barry Golden

As I write this in early January, we have had very little moisture since August. I have been watering about every 2-3 weeks very deeply, meaning about 2 hours worth. I will wait for the warming rays of the sun in early afternoon to start watering as my extensive drip system is usually thawed out by then.

This time of year, believe it or nor, the irises are starting to grow fans. It really has not been that cold this year and many of the larger leaves have been frost killed, but many of the smaller leaves have been spared. So, what you need to do now, today, is get out into your garden and pull the dead brown leaves from your clumps. If you don't, the warming rays of the sun can't get to the rhizome to warm it up as well as the surrounding soil. No warming rays of the sun, leaf and rhizome will be stunted. Stunted growth means small bloom stalks, if bloom will occur at all. Your choice.

The other important thing to do now is to get some 10-10-10 garden fertilizer and spread about a cup worth per clump around the clump. Some of you like Miracle Gro. You can use that but I consider it junk food for plants. But if it is either Miracle Gro or nothing, go with the junk food.

Another issue that needs to be dealt with is the covering of the rhizomes with dirt. Because of the constant freeze and thaw and some erosion, soil will cover the rhizome. Get out there and with your fingers or a trowel, gently remove the soil from the tops of the rhizomes. Remember, the warming rays of the sun are your friend and will encourage leaf and rhizome growth even at this time of year.

So, to review: water, fertilize and scrape soil from the rhizomes. These winter afternoons are really nice to be in the garden. Remember, you could be in Wisconsin right now.



2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January no meeting

February 10 - Irises from the 2006 National Convention, Kathy Chilton, Region 15 RVP

March—No meeting

April 14—Reblooming Iris—Linda Smith

April— 20-22 Region 15 2007 Spring Trek, "The Artist's Palette" hosted by Inland Region Iris Society Ontario, CA—see insert

April/May—members garden tours- to be announced

May 11—Sneak Peak with potluck at Golden's Iris Garden

May 19 -Spring Exhibit—Mortimer Nursery

May 26—Member garden tour at Linda Rossman's

June No meeting

July — Dig and divide demonstration with Barry

July 27—marking party

August 4 -Rhizome Sale- Sharlot Hall Museum

September—Potluck

November—Program

December—No meeting

February 10 Meeting

You will be notified of the time and place for this event by email or telephone.

Kathy Chilton, the RVP for Region 15, will be giving a PowerPoint presentation of "Reigning Irises - the 2006 AIS National Convention at Portland, Oregon". Come see the great opportunities for viewing iris which are available when attending an AIS national convention. The 2007 national convention will be in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, April 30– May 5. A registration form is on page 4 of this newsletter.

Message from the President.....

Happy New Year! As we begin this new year of 2007 and I begin my term as president I want to acknowledge the extensive time and commitment by our past presidents Judy and Stan Book in growing the Prescott Area Iris Society.

Our club is relatively young and not nearly as large as some others in Region 15; there are ten other AIS (American Iris Society) affiliates in the area, which encompasses Southern California and all of Arizona. Last year we doubled our membership, which now totals 65, and we provided some outstanding events during 2006.

In addition to educational programs and a couple super potlucks for our members we presented our seventh annual Iris Exhibit in May and the Annual Rhizome Sale at Sharlot Hall in August for the public. Our participation in the Autumn Fair at Mortimer Nursery and the Farmers' Market at Yavapai College provided additional promotion of the iris culture to the public.

A PAIS first occurred last spring with five "Member Garden Tours." We are planning those again this spring, and hope to invite you to tour some of our Verde Valley members' gardens (this would be a bit earlier than the tours in the immediate Prescott area.)

In late summer our community outreach was really enhanced by our donation/planting of 13 iris varieties in the Sculpture Garden at Yavapai College.

Now to begin 2007. Kathy Chilton, Region 15 Vice President, will present a slide program on the 2006 National AIS Convention at the first general meeting Saturday, February 10th. The meeting location is pending at this time – we want to have better parking and AV lighting for you. You will be notified by email or by phone of the exact meeting location.

Don't hesitate to call me at 928-445-8132 if you have questions or comments. See you on the 10th!

Vera Stewart

Addendum: Longtime PAIS member Charles Maxwell died December 28, 2006. During recent years Charlie became very involved in hybridizing iris – several of us are growing some of his seedlings. This quiet, unassuming gentleman, with his wonderful smile, has named PAIS in his will; he had planned more than a year ago that once his family had their choice of named

(cont. next column)

(Message cont.)

irises from his gardens, the remainder of all named varieties would be donated to our club. You may wish to attend his memorial service at 3 p.m. Saturday, January 27th at the Heritage Mortuary, Prescott.



Blooming Iris In January in Virginia!!

After unusually low temperatures in the first week of December, terrible times, we in Richmond have enjoyed a warm and wet holiday season. New Year's Day brought steady rains to about three inches total and daytime temperatures have generally been above 50F, even 60F, for some days. We see this from time to time at this season, although rarely for so sustained a stretch as this; accordingly, it is glorious, but rather unsettling. I wish you could see the camellias.

Like many in this area, I take my exercise on Monument Avenue, a grand residential boulevard lined by brick and stone mansions from the turn of the century and punctuated by monumental statues, preponderantly of heroes of the Civil War. A walk from my home and from one end of the historic portion of the promenade to the other is almost exactly three miles. There is a good deal to see and to think about. For some time now on my walk I have been watching a stalk that emerged from a street side planting of bearded iris rhizomes, a planting, overgrown and surprisingly untrimmed, frankly, given the ultra posh locale. The plant is on the South side of the street where, in addition to being peed on by untold numbers of dogs, it has been receiving a great deal of sunlight and reflected warmth. Today, the bud began to open and, as I had surmised, it is clearly Iris pallida, or something pretty closely related.

Blooming at a height of three feet, on a straight stem with two very short branches, no visible PBF and wholly scarious spathes, the plant has put forth an apparently undamaged lavender blossom with a beard conspicuously tipped yellow. There is a mild fragrance of grapes. It is almost certainly a diploid, although, interestingly, the foliage short for pallida. ...but who is to say what is normal in these situations?

Today the flower was still opening. It will be interesting to see what it looks like when fully expanded.

Cordially,
Anner Whitehead

(This message was posted on Iris-Talk and used with the permission of the writer.)

Charles Maxwell Remembered

During my lifetime I have known many wonderful people and Charles Maxwell is among the finest. Charles joined our club in 2003 and faithfully attended meetings and participated in events like the marking party and rhizome sale. His interest in iris was keen and he was especially intrigued by a presentation on exhibiting iris given in April 2004. Charles entered "Skating Party" in the Spring 2004 exhibit and won an award for the largest flower. He was extremely proud of winning an award in the first exhibit he had entered.

Another aspect of Charles love for iris was evidenced by his interest in hybridizing. For a number of years before joining the Prescott Area Iris Society, Charles had enjoyed hybridizing as a hobby and had at least 22 seedlings which he was evaluating for possible introduction. The colors of his seedlings ranged from white with a blue or lavender tint to yellow, gold, rose, purple and mauve. Several members of our club are the happy guardians of Charles seedlings so the iris could be evaluated under various growing conditions.

Visiting Charles home was always a pleasure. His front garden was a wonderful combination of native trees and shrubs with annuals, perennials and irises intermingled. Rabbits and havelina were kept out by a fence however, even Charles experienced garden desecration by wildlife when the front gate was inadvertently left unlatched. One of Charles favorite pastimes was to sit on his front porch reading and appreciating the beauty of nature.

The beds of at least 250 named irises were in a fenced area in his terraced backyard. The irises, neatly identified and systematically planted in 14 beds, were surrounded by apple and apricot trees, a grape arbor, butterfly bushes and hollyhocks in addition to other flowers and shrubs. In spite of the fence deer and raccoons were frequent visitors and were especially partial to the apples. Charles took this in stride and amused and chagrined by their tenacity.

Beyond the fenced area, the land sloped down to a creek bed and discarded rhizomes were frequently tossed into this "wilderness". Charles marveled at the ability of the rhizomes to flourish and bloom even though they were unattended.

Gentleness and generosity are two descriptions that apply to Charles. He loved to gently and patiently show and explain his iris notebooks full of photos, maps and tables detailing colors, types, locations and hybridizing efforts. Charles generously donated space

in his garden to grow rhizomes for the iris society and also freely donated rhizomes for our sales.

Charles is survived by his lovely wife Harriet and four adult children. Cards of condolence may be sent to Judy Book, Attn: Remembrance, 2175 Aspen Acres Drive, Prescott, AZ 86303 and I will deliver them to the family.

The club is making a donation in Charles memory to the Hospice of the Valley and is in the process of setting up an annual award to honor Charles at our spring exhibits. We will miss Charles' generosity and gentleness.



A flower's appeal is in its contradictions - so delicate in form yet strong in fragrance, so small in size yet big in beauty, so short in life yet long on effect. ~Adabella Radici



New Year's Resolutions

It is never too late to make new resolutions. You may want to add some of the following to your list.

I will attend meetings, exhibits and sales and bring a friend.

I will enter the spring exhibit and try an arrangement.

I will volunteer my time to help with the rhizome sale, spring show, digging rhizomes, Farmer's Market booth etc.

I will buy and plant at least one 2000 or newer iris this year.

I will update my garden map.

I will verify the accuracy of my plant markers during the blooming season.

I will start or update my iris notebook.

I will give a rhizome to a friend who is not yet growing iris.



2007 Officers & Board Members

President—Vera Stewart

Vice President—Cam Waguespack

Secretary—Shirley Eitner

Treasurer—Linda Rossman