

# PRESCOTT AREA IRIS SOCIETY



## President's Message

Spring is here!! Leaves are on the trees, flowers are beginning to bloom. Tulips and daffodils and yes our beloved irises are blooming with new bloom stalks appearing every few days. We had a mild winter and the proof is in the early bloom season we are seeing. It is time to tend to our gardens. Final cleaning, fertilizing, watering, and caring for our irises to produce the biggest best blooms is what we do and sometimes we focus on that only.

As we care for our gardens let us not forget to care for each other also. Relationships are a lot like our irises. When neglected they wither and die or do not flower again. We currently have 62+ members some we have not seen in a while, others who are new and others who are not capable of driving anymore, but would love to attend and see some familiar faces. Some cannot tend their gardens any longer. As we focus on our iris let us also focus on each other, making new friends in PAIS with common interests. Let us be welcoming to new members many of which should be at our next meeting. Look for those you do not know and extend a hand of friendship. To those who cannot drive offer to pick them up and bring them to a meeting or event. For those who cannot tend their gardens, a few hours with them might be what they need, so offer to help. There are many things we can do to help each other and make PAIS a welcoming place to enjoy. Bring a friend, volunteer for our outreach project event days and lend a hand to make our community a more beautiful place. Volunteer for work days at the Sculpture Garden iris, Sharlot Hall Historic Iris Gardens, or Citizens Cemetery Restoration, help teach a class on irises in the elementary schools to children, give a lecture at the college level or a community club. We are generating materials for all of these to make it easy.

We are nearing two major events. This year we are doing a member's only Garden Tour and progressive dinner. We will start out at the Sculpture Garden, proceed to the Luebkin's home, continue to Dede Erceg's home, and wind up at Carolyn Alexander's home. Each venue will have some type of food or dessert. This will be a special time to view our irises and renew relationships. See *Garden Tour* page 4.

Our second major event which is not far away, will be our May 17 Spring Exhibit, Kaleidoscope of Color. This is an all hands on deck event. From set up to tear down, greeters, members manning the tables and many other jobs for many people. We are expecting several hundred people from all over Arizona to attend. Call Judy Book (776-7217) to find out what you can do to help. And let us not forget we need iris for display. With our early bloom season we could be potentially hard pressed for iris blooms. Last year we had 130 entries, we hope this year to have more than that as people love to view iris, so bring as many of yours as you can spare.

The rules will be handed out at the April 26 meeting and are now available on our website: [http://prescottirissociety.org/annual\\_events/kaleidoscope\\_of\\_color/](http://prescottirissociety.org/annual_events/kaleidoscope_of_color/). This will be a People's Choice awards exhibit so all are welcome. The awards will be gift certificates from a local nursery.

We hope that you are enjoying and using your new membership book. I have found it to be a very useful resource. Thank you Bonnie and Judy for putting that book together.

Best Regards to All,

Dennis Luebkin, President

# SPRING THINGS TO SEE & DO

## 2014 Calendar of Events

<b>April 12</b>	<b>Sun Country Show and Sale (details pg. 3)</b>
<b>April 18-19</b>	<b>Region 15 Spring Trek – Burbank, CA reservations due April 10th</b>
<b>April 26</b>	<b>General Meeting 1:30-3:30 pm Yavapai Title 1235 E. Gurley St.</b>
<b>May 2</b>	<b>OLLI Lecture #1</b>
<b>May 3</b>	<b>Highland Center Native Plant Sale – (see details below)  Historic Iris Planting – Sharlot Hall Museum</b>
<b>May 7-8</b>	<b>Sculpture Garden Clean Up</b>
<b>May 9</b>	<b>OLLI Lecture #2</b>
<b>May 10</b>	<b>Member Garden Tour/Progressive Meal</b>
<b>May 16</b>	<b>Iris Exhibit Set Up – Mortimer Nursery</b>
<b>May 17</b>	<b>OLLI Lecture #3 at exhibit and Iris Exhibit- Mortimer Nursery</b>
<b>May 17</b>	<b>Spring Iris Exhibit</b>

Re-vitalize your habitat this year at the **Highlands Center Plant Sale**. This year, along with our diverse selection of regionally native plants, on Saturday only a variety of local artwork will be available for purchase. Artwork will be designed for outdoor additions to a developed space or for the beginning inspiration of a new outdoor space. Plants will also be available Sunday 11 am – 3 pm.

Spring Native Plant Sale & Outdoor-Art Festival  
 Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8:30 am – 2 pm General Admission  
 8 am – 8:30 am Members Only Admission

# More to see & do.....

## Spring Iris Care

1. Remove dead leaves
2. Pull weeds while they are small. Take care not to break off the new, young fans.
3. Uncover dirt from tops of rhizomes
4. Replace fallen and faded plant markers and make sure your iris map is up to date
5. Fertilize now and water in the fertilizer. Use a low nitrogen fertilizer like 5-10-10 or 10-10-10. Avoid putting fertilizer granuals in direct contact with the rhizomes.
6. Water the iris regularly every 7-10 days if it has been dry, to insure good bloom. Iris need to dry out completely between each watering.

### Aphid control

Tip from Judy Book: It seems I have never licked this problem with a systemic fertilizer, so maybe it was not applied early enough in the spring. An article I found on the internet: <http://pestcontroloptions.com/aphids/9-ecofriendly-aphid-control-methods> has some homemade sprays which may be worth a try. I have not used any of these methods so I cannot vouch for their effectiveness.

## **Sun Country Iris Society Spring Iris Show & Sale April 12**

11:00 AM to 2:00 PM (Sale starts at 10:00 AM)

Christown Mall (south entrance between Harkins and Wal-Mart

1700 W. Bethany Home, Phoenix, AZ

7:00 am to 8:30 am

### **Late Iris Exhibit**

MAY 3

9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

BakerNursery

3414 N. 40th St.

Phoenix, AZ 85018

# More to see & do.....

## YCSG Sculpture Garden and Citizens Cemetery

Our first spring workday in the garden was March 13 and 11 brave souls showed up to groom the iris clumps and get the iris beds looking ship shape again. Thanks to Dede, Sharon and Dennis, Sharon S. Barb M., Patrick, Jean, Darrell, Katy, Judy and Stan. Take time to stop at the gardens and enjoy the iris bloom which is beginning a month early this year. Sarah Taylor, Roman Song and Afternoon Delight are blooming profusely with bloom stalks on about 10 other clumps. What is blooming changes frequently so visit often.

The iris in the Cemetery are also starting to bloom. Drive through the gate on Sheldon, enjoy the serenity, view the iris and the revitalization of the some of the plots.

## “GRAZING AND GAZING” the 2014 Garden Tour

Sharon Luebkin

While on our way to the Fall Trek in 2013, Kathleen Shaffer and I were discussing an article in the latest AIS Magazine . It was about a club who did their garden tour with a Progressive Dinner. It really sounded like fun and who among us doesn't love to eat and enjoy iris in bloom? Two of my favorite things!!! And when will this amazing garden tour occur? It is scheduled for Saturday May 10<sup>th</sup>, just one week before our “Kaleidoscope of Color Show”. We will meet at the Sculpture Garden at 1:00 sharp. I'm sure hats and sun block will be the order of the day.

We'll start our tour at the Yavapai Sculpture Garden and graze on **appetizers** through the “Pride of PAIS Garden” while enjoying our Dykes Medal Winners and see the new Storybook Garden and plantings of the Black Iris bed which has yet to be named and Iris donated by the former Verde Valley Iris Club. We will also be discussing and perhaps have a site for the Hot Shot Memorial. Kathleen and T.G. Shaffer will be our garden hosts with Patrick Beatty there to tell us about the sculpture and the “Friends of Yavapai College Art”.

Next we'll go to the Luebkin's and see the new iris beds, which are currently home to the historic iris needed for planting at Sharlot Hall Museum. It's quite a collection sent from all over the country. There we will enjoy “**Italian Style Brochette**” hot off the grill and **soup** and **salads**.

Then we will head to Chino Valley to Dede Erceg's home on the hill. She is a Master Gardener so iris will not be the only treat for the eyes. The main course will be served there along with **side dishes** provided by members. Our club will be providing the yet to be decided **main dishes**.

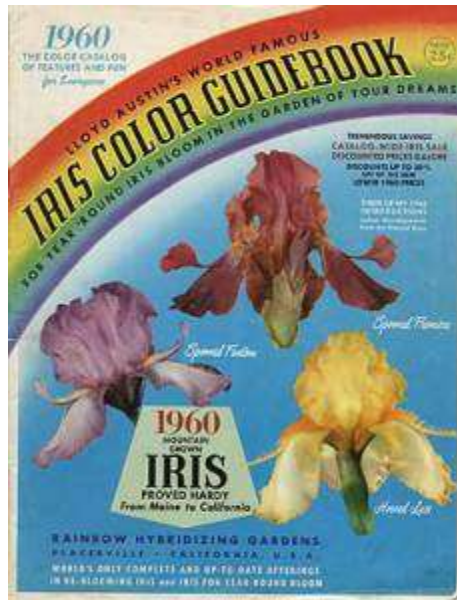
To finish our feeding frenzy we will travel to “Chateau Alexander” for the frosting on the cake so to speak. **Desserts** will be served at Carolyn Alexander's home after a much needed walk through her amazing and creative iris garden. Are you hungry yet? Our telephone committee will be calling you to see what you'd like to share on our first ever “Progressive Dinner and Garden Tour”. We may have a small group joining us from our sister club in Tucson-TAIS.

Maps will be provided at your first stop, the Sculpture Garden, and carpooling is recommended.

# Lots to Learn About



“Wings At Dawn”, winner 2013 Iris Naming Contest



1960 Catalog Cover from Lloyd Austin's Iris Gardens

The story of the intentional breeding of Iris sporting horns, spoons and flouncings reveals a bit of serendipity as well.

The odd protrusions from the tips of the beards, once decried by some Irisarians as “monstrosities”, were launched into the Iris breeding world and landed themselves a spot in Iris history in the early 1950's. The late Lloyd Austin (1898-1963) cultivated the Iris oddities, hatching the idea after a fortuitous visit to the gardens of Sydney Mitchell (1878-1951) in Placerville, CA in the late 1940's. (This is the very same Mitchell after whom the American Iris Society's “Sydney B. Mitchell Medal” is named.) The story goes that Mitchell had no interest in these errant traits among his Iris crosses, and willingly offered the seedlings to his friend. Mr. Austin worked with these unique seedlings, crossing them at his gardens, until he achieved the horns, spoons and flouncings and even double appendages at the ends of the beards, thus launching the niche of the “Space Age” Iris. Lloyd Austin's first horned introduction was “Unicorn” in 1954. Throughout the 1960's, Lloyd Austin promoted the unusually adorned Iris through his colorful catalogs (see image). [Check this link for more on the story of Lloyd Austin](#) and his 1954 debut with “Unicorn” on the American Iris Society's “World of Irises” blog.





Mesmerizer, Monty Byers 1991

Several breeders have carried on the “space” program with great success, despite the opinion still maintained by some Irisarians that these appendages are a distraction or unpleasant. The late Monty Byers, for starters, introduced several award-winning winged, horned or spooned Iris over the years. Take a look at [Thornbird](#) (Dykes Medal 1997), [Conjuration](#) (Dykes Medal 1998), and [Mesmerizer](#) (Dykes Medal 2002) for starters. Lawrence Ransom (“Punk”, 1998; “Three Two One Lift Off”, 2008) and Tom Burseen (“I Wuv Woses”, 2008) also have bred wonderful, fun “space agers”.

*The above information on the birth of “space age” iris was adapted from passages from the [World of Irises](#), and publications by Kelly Norris ([A Guide to Bearded Irises](#)), and William Shear ([The Gardener’s Iris Book](#) – out of print).*

## **APRIL 26th MEETING**

### **~ FUN WITH SUCCULENTS**

Presenter, Bonnie Sekenske ~ Learn about winter hardy succulents and fun things to do with them.



### **~ Prepping for the Spring Show**

A demonstration and discussion by the experts in Iris preparation for Shows. Learn how to categorize the bloom stalk and prepare your Iris for the show. [All Members please bring an Iris bloom, scissors, cotton balls & Styrofoam to participate in this learning experience!](#) We will provide the containers used for shows.

Be sure to check out our Facebook page [https://www.facebook.com/prescottiris/photos\\_albums](https://www.facebook.com/prescottiris/photos_albums) to see members' garden photos.

## Purple Based Foliage

One of the desirable characteristics of an iris is that it be "distinctive". While purple based foliage, commonly called "PBF", may not be a characteristic that is given much weight by garden judges, it certainly adds to the viewing pleasure. The amount of purple pigment varies from a slight blush to a heavy infusion that carries well upward from the base of the leaves .

Gardening magazines as early as 1908 were mentioning this trait. For those wishing to know the origin of purple at the base of the base of the leaves of some irises, here is a quote from an article W. R. Dykes wrote in 1915 as noted by Clarence Mahan <http://www.hort.net/lists/iris/jan97/msg00256.html>

*PBF on Thornbird in sculpture garden*

*"Early this year there came up in my garden here many shoots of a form of this iris [Iris aphylla} from Ermihalyfalva in Hungary. The deep purple-violet tips of some of the young shoots were really an astonishing sight, and these plants now retain their deep colour at the base. Others were less deeply coloured, while a few were wholly green....As far as I can see, this colour at the base is a character unconnected with any other character, and occurs both in this species and in I. variegata...."*\*



Several hybridizers have worked with this trait, but so far no one has succeeded in producing an iris with "PBF" that extends from the base to the tips of the leaves, but the blue anthocyanin pigments have been known to color stalks and/or spathes in some plants.

Two iris which look very similar may be identified correctly by whether or not they have "PBF". The American Dykes Medal 1940 winner 'Wabash' can be distinguished from the similar 'Bright Hour' because 'Wabash' has purple based foliage. <http://wiki.irises.org/bin/view/Main/InfoNoveltyPurpleBasedFoliage>

For a partial listing of iris with pbf: <http://lfrazer.com/iris/irispbf.html>

\*Note: *I vagiegata* and *I aphylla* are species iris collected from nature.

From the Garden's of  
Carolyn, Mary M, Ruth D, Vera, Ruth S & Barb M





From the Garden's of  
Ruth D, Leigh, Marge, Ruth S, Vera & Carolyn



# Business Update

*A Warm Welcome to New Members ~ Barb Harlib and Jean & Wayne Hood*

## BIRTHDAY BOARD

### MARCH

Ruth Simmons 3 ~ Bonnie Sekenske 4 ~ Stan Book 9 ~ Joella Cheek 12 ~ Vera Stewart 14

Judy Book 27 ~ Elaine Fleming 29

### APRIL

Jean Hood 4 ~ Dennis Luebkin 22 ~Annette McDonald 29

### MAY

Mary Meinholz ~ 19

*Wishing everyone the best birthday ever!!*

### **Summary of Proposed Prescott Area Iris Society Bylaw Changes dated March 28, 2014**

Bylaws currently in existence are dated November 17, 2012

The following is a proposed Bylaw change which was passed by a unanimous vote of PAIS board members present on this date. This change allows PAIS to annually print the newly adopted membership booklet and facilitates giving a composition of our membership to National and Regional offices in a more timely fashion. This will be voted upon at our PAIS general meeting April 26, 2014

### **CURRENT BYLAWS:**

#### **Article 5 Dues**

5.1 Annual dues are payable in January and shall be past due March 1. Loss of membership will be automatic upon failure to renew by March 1.

### **PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGE:**

#### **Article 5 Dues**

5.1 Annual dues are to be paid by January of each calendar year (note: dues may be paid for the subsequent year beginning in November).

Respectfully submitted,

2014 PAIS board members