



## PRESCOTT AREA IRIS SOCIETY

VOLUME 12 ISSUE 5

NOVEMBER 2015



### PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Greetings to All,

After two years of planning and preparation, PAIS sponsored the American Iris Society Region 15 Fall Conference. What a conference it was!!! Sharon Luebkin and Kathleen Shaffer's Fall Conference Committee and volunteers did a magnificent job putting this together and pulling it off. Our speaker, Kelly Norris, had a wonderful talk on the "Future of Irises" and the use of smaller iris varieties for tighter garden spaces. His judges training on miniature irises and medians was most informative. Whether you were in the judges training program or just sat in for the information, it was great. See Sharon Luebkin's article on page 4 for more Conference details. The Meet and Greet book signing was a wonderful event on Friday evening, giving our members and guests from Region 15 a chance to meet, mingle and talk to Kelly and one another other and make new friends. Saturday's Conference was a busy day with much going on from the Region 15 Board Meeting to our speaker's presentation, judges training, silent auction, raffle and boutique. The continental breakfast and luncheon buffet were delicious.

The volunteers helped with the setup and tear down of Fridays' Meet and Greet book signing, and Saturday's very early morning setup, the Conference silent auction and raffle and afternoon tear down. Our PAIS members were there to get the job done. I am pleased and proud of the work that PAIS members did to make this event a resounding success.

Comments from our out of town guests from Tucson, Phoenix, and Southern California affiliates attending the Conference were wonderful. Comments such as "what a gracious club PAIS is". "PAIS set the bar high for Fall Conferences". "One of the best we have attended." "The speaker was one of the best." "It was great." "There was something for everyone."

Our Fall Conference Committee (trek Committee) worked hard on this event planning and organizing the conference for two years and our volunteer members made it a success. It was lots of work, but lots of fun too. A big thank you to all who participated and helped.

Best Regards to all,

Dennis Luebkin

### NEW MEMBER WELCOME

**Julie Cook**

**Janis Keeling**

**Gerald & Mary Mitchell**

**Catherine Van Klompenburg**

### November 21 Meeting 1 p.m. Species Iris? Who Knew!

Our next and final meeting of the year, Saturday, November 21, will feature a presentation on species iris by our very own Eugene Zielinski, our annual officer election and a potluck. PAIS will supply the main meatball dish of several flavors. Members will be asked to provide the following to share at the potluck:

A-L appetizer or side dish and M-Z salad or dessert. Call Sharon Sundvall, [928-515-2500](tel:928-515-2500) by November 15, with your contribution preference.

There will be a raffle of Conference items and potted iris. We will even have a few boutique items for sale. Each member will be given a free raffle ticket. Dennis is putting together a Conference slide show from for us to enjoy while we eat our lunch.

We will meet at Yavapai Title, 1235 East Gurley at **1:00 p.m.**, one half hour earlier than our usual meeting time. Plan to attend.

Barb McCurry

**A special thank you to Vicki Hughes for  
help creating the newsletter this  
month!!**

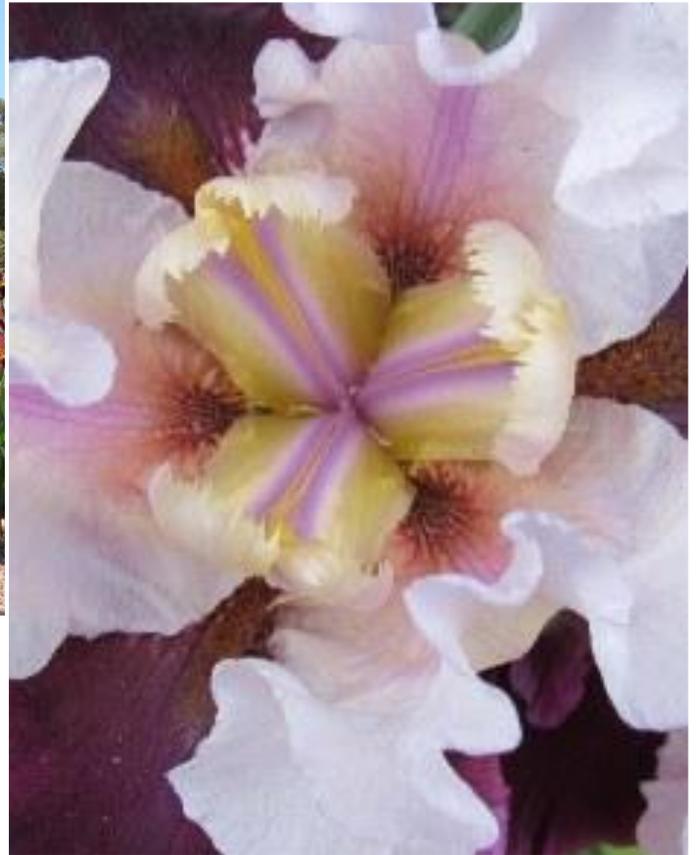
**7th Annual Photo Contest Winners**

Landscape – 1<sup>st</sup> Carolyn A.; 2<sup>nd</sup> Ruth  
Single iris or cluster – 1<sup>st</sup> Dennis; 2<sup>nd</sup> Ruth  
Macro or close-up – 1<sup>st</sup> Barbara; 2<sup>nd</sup> Sharon L.

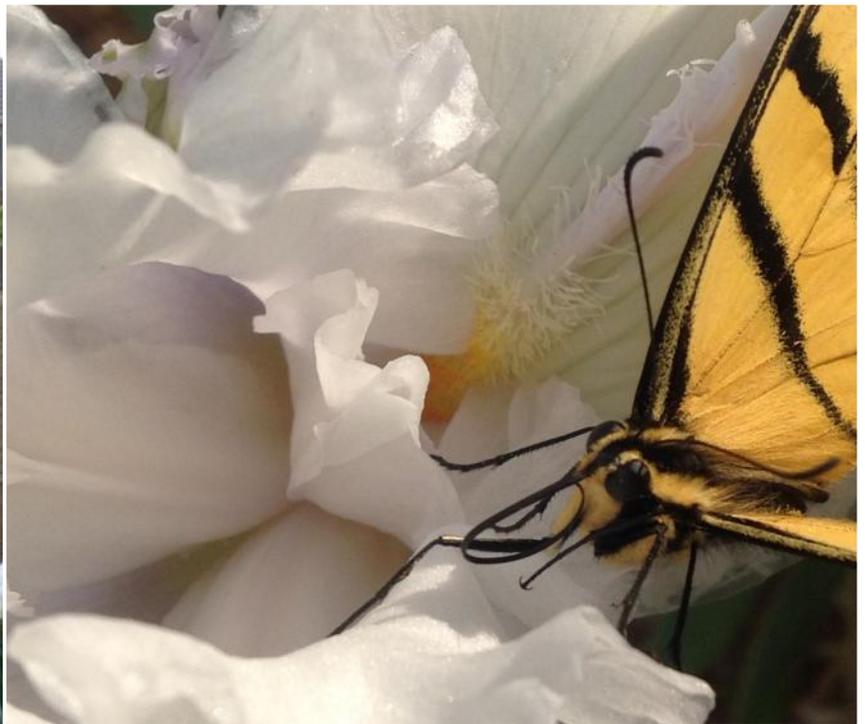


Landscape—Carolyn Alexander

Single Iris—Dennis Luebkin



Animal—Vera Stewart



Macro—Barb McCurry



**Animal—Joella Cheek**

**Landscape—Ruth Simon**

**Close-up—Sharon Luebkin**

**Single Iris—Ruth Simon**



## Fall Conference a “Rooten Tooten” Success

PAIS hosted the annual American Iris Society Region 15 Fall Conference October 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> which includes clubs from all of Arizona and Southern California. Our keynote speaker was Kelly Norris, author, director of the Greater Des Moines Botanical Gardens, horticulturalist and owner of Rainbow Iris Gardens in Iowa. He spoke about planning smaller gardens for the future with smaller available space and smaller varieties of irises.



Our Conference started with a “Meet and Greet” book signing with our speaker with an opportunity to purchase his book “A Guide to Bearded Irises” and have it autographed. The Hassayampa Inn lobby was the perfect venue. Attendees were treated to hors d’oeuvres and a birthday cake celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tucson Iris Society (TAIS). It was a wonderful opportunity for our members to visit, relax and socialize with members of other affiliate clubs from around Arizona and Southern California. We all deserved this fun time together. Our iris friends from Arizona and California came in slowly during the evening, tired and hungry after their long drives from California of up to 8 to 10 hours . That’s dedication!!! They were tired and didn’t stay with us long so Friday was truly our party. A big thank you, to all who were there.

Saturday found many members there at 6:30 a.m. ready to setup for the Conference, Raffle, Silent Auction, Boutique and the Region 15 Board meeting. Everything was setup on time thanks to all who came and helped. We have been told that Prescott has set the bar high for future fall Conferences.

Our Fall Conference Committee met for 2 years planning this and their hard work showed. These members, Sharon Luebkin, Kathleen Shaffer, Judy Book, Sue Crabtree, Sharon Sundvall, Jean Cole, Marge Larson, Vera Stewart, Leigh Skellenger, Dede Erceg, Carolyn Alexander, Linda Rossman and Dennis Luebkin all added their time and talents to make this a success.

A special thank you to all our members who dug, cleaned and helped sell iris rhizomes which raised the money to pay for our conference. PAIS has the most dedicated and hard working members imaginable. We love you all.

Thanks a 1,000,000,  
Sharon Luebkin

Photos courtesy of Barb McCurry and Ruth Simons



## Winter Iris Care -

Dennis Luebkin

With the cold weather and some freezing temperatures upon us, rest assured winter is just around the corner. Central Arizona and the Prescott area have one of the most diverse climate zones in the state and perhaps the Southwest. Just within a 40 mile radius of downtown Prescott, we have changes in elevation from 8,500 ft to 3,500 ft. Because of the diversity of climate zones, the conditions for your iris care vary somewhat along with the time periods that we do our seasonal work. The warmer your microclimate is the later you can complete your iris care. This is supposed to be a strong El Nino year with rain, snow and colder temperatures so don't delay too long.

In general, our fall and winter care should be as follows:

**Cleaning and Weeding:** Keep your iris beds free of dead leaves and weeds. Pull out those pesky elm tree seedlings.

The longer you wait the tougher they are to get out. In warmer areas leaves will begin to brown. In our colder areas leaves have already turned color, wilted from the freezing temperatures and fallen. Cleaning and cutting iris leaves is somewhat of a personal preference. You either do it in the fall or early spring (kind of a pay now or pay later scenario). Some like to cut them in the fall others like to do the cleaning in the early spring. Leaf litter is great for composting. If you are into that, save the leaves and compost them for use in the garden.

Remove the dead leaves by pulling or cutting. One thing to note, leaves that are not dead or dying back are still producing food for the rhizome even during the fall and winter, so exercise care in how much of the fan you remove. If the leaves are dead, remove them since the dead leaves harbor the eggs of thrips and aphids.

Check the rhizomes to see if they are covered or buried too deeply. Two things will happen during the freeze/thaw weather of late fall and winter. Freezing will either cause the ground to rise around the rhizome and cover it up or it will lift the rhizome and pop it out of the ground. Either uncover the top of the rhizome or push the rhizome back into the ground and cover the roots, but keep the top of the rhizome uncovered.

Look for root rot. As you clean, check for the smell of rotting leaves and rhizomes. If the rhizome is soft take action immediately. Comet or Ajax cleanser is good to use on the rhizome. Cut off the rotted area, then sprinkle the cleanser on the affected area of the rhizome. This will help dry out the rhizome and kill bacteria and fungus.

**Mulching:** For those of us who live in colder areas with lower temperatures, mulching may be advisable this year.

For those with the availability of pine needles, mulching with them over tender plants, roses and your irises, both potted and in the ground will help get them through a long cold winter. If you do not have pine needles straw is a good substitute. Other leaf and vegetative material are not advised since they decompose quickly and may cause the rhizomes to rot.

**Fertilizing:** Don't fertilize at this time. Fertilizing now stimulates new growth which you do not want now. Irises need some dormancy before putting on their spring growth and bloom. You should wait until February. We try to fertilize by Valentine's Day as a bench mark. We call it "Love Your Iris Day". At the latest, fertilize early in March. We will talk more about fertilizing at our February meeting. If you live in a warmer climate zone such as Sedona, Camp Verde area or Yarnell, fertilizing in late January and early February is appropriate.

One thing to note concerning one of our most favorite fertilizers. Although it may be a very effective fertilizer and insect control, some of the ingredients in "Bayer Systemic Rose and Flower Care", or two in one, which is used to control thrips and aphids, have been linked to the decrease in the honey bee population. A multipurpose food such as Arizona's Best all purpose food, 10-10-10 is still recommended or use Best 6-24-24XB which also contains sulfur and iron which is wonderful for bloom production. All purpose rose foods may also be used.

**Watering:** Watering is dependent upon our weather. If the winter is dry and warm, watering every week or two should be appropriate. If we have a cold wet winter you may not need to water very much. Check the soil moisture by digging down about 3 inches. If the ground is dry, give the iris a deep watering.

**Composting:** Composting is good to do during the off season. You can even use the iris leaves to add to your compost pile. Your irises are taking a winter holiday break to regenerate for spring, so you can too. Enjoy the holidays!!!

### 2016 Master Gardener Class

Applications for the 2016 Master Gardener class are available on the website, here is the link <http://extension.arizona.edu/yavapai-county-master-gardener-volunteer-training-application> On this webpage you will also find a link to details about the class. Feel free to share this with anyone who is interested in taking the class. All classes are held on Tuesdays at the Yavapai College campus in Clarkdale. Applications must be postmarked by December 1, 2015. This series of classes will be offered in Prescott in 2017.

### **Nominating Committee Results**

Your nominating committee consisting of Barb McCurry, Patrick Beatty, and Sharon Luebkin met in September and have contacted numerous individuals for positions on your 2016 Executive Board. Here is the list of nominees that have accepted running for the positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.

**President:** Dennis Luebkin. Dennis is a two term past President and currently interim President replacing Dan Schroeder. 2016 will be Dennis' last term as President.

**Vice President:** Barb McCurry. Barb will continue as VP.

**Treasurer:** Eugene Zielinski. Eugene will continue as Treasurer.

**Secretary:** Joella Cheek. Joella will continue as Secretary.

We encourage all members to become active in the Executive Board, Governing Board, along with committee chairpersons and event coordinators. More information will follow in subsequent newsletters on position responsibilities. If you are interested in a position or helping someone in that position and would like to learn more about it, contact one of your board members. Besides Executive Board positions for 2017, here is a list of appointed positions that will need to be filled for the year 2016. Please join your PAIS team to make us a continued success.

<b>2016 Governing Board</b>	<b>2016 Non-Voting appointed Coordinators/Committee</b>	
Director-at-large: Sue Crabtree	Citizen Cemetery: <b>Not Filled</b>	Silent Auction: <b>Not Filled</b>
Newsletter: Judy Book, Vicki Hughes	Embry-Riddle AU Memorial Garden: Dede Erceg, Dennis	Photo Contest: <b>Not Filled</b>
Membership: Sharon Luebkin	Youth Education: Sharon Luebkin, Sue Crabtree	New Member Training: Linda Rossman
Publicity: Sue Crabtree, Dennis Luebkin	Adult & College Lecture Series: Dennis & Sharon	Rhizome Sales: <b>Not Filled</b>
YC Sculpture Garden: Patrick Beatty	Phone Tree notifications: Judy Reynolds	
Sharlot Hall Historic Iris Garden <b>Not Filled</b>	Hospitality: Sharon Sundvall	
Education (Youth and Adult): Sharon Luebkin	Members Garden Tour : Linda Rossman	
	Spring Exhibit/Show: Barb McCurry	

### **2015 PAIS CONTACTS**

Interim President : Dennis Luebkin dluebkin@q.com      623 980-6627	Embry Riddle Univ. planting: Dede Erceg
Vice President: Barb McCurry    bj4mccurry@hotmail.com	Citizen Cemetery planting: Dennis & Sharon Luebkin
Secretary: Joella Cheek    joella@commspeed.net	PAIS website: <a href="http://prescottirissociety.org/">http://prescottirissociety.org/</a>
YC Sculpture Garden: Dede Erceg    DedeErceg@gmail.com	<u>Mailing Address:</u>
Education: Sharon Luebkin    sluebkin@q.com	Prescott Area Iris Society
Sharlot Hall Museum planting: Dennis Luebkin	P O Box 11918
	Prescott, AZ 86304

Reblooming in Our Gardens



Boundless -Joella



Again and Again - Barb



Just Call Me - Barb



Double Your Fun—Dede



Autumn Circus -Dede



Clarence—Joella

### A History of Iris Continued—part 3

Dennis Luebkin

As the Roman Empire crumbled and the western world began to sink into the Dark Ages the last great Roman Legion in the west was defeated in a great battle by the Frankish King, Clovis, in 496 AD. Legend has it that Clovis, in a dream before the battle, had received irises from an angel signifying his coming victory over the Romans. It was at this time that Clovis, who was a pagan king, converted to Christianity. It was also at this time that Clovis had three irises placed on his royal banner which he took into the battle against the Romans. The iris design placed on his banner eventually became known as the fleur-de-lis and was the national symbol of French Royalty for 1200 years until the French Revolution in 1789 when it became a crime to exhibit or wear any fleur-de-lis symbol punishable by death. This is one of several stories on how Clovis and the fleur-de-lis originated.

During the Dark Ages, the iris was also used as a symbol of power and majesty by Charlemagne, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Charlemagne, in his writings, noted the culture of irises in France during his reign. During the middle ages the iris and fleur-de-lis were used in the heraldry of numerous royal families of Europe including England, France, the Vatican, Florence, and many others. Knights used them on their armor, crests and battle flags. The fleur-de-lis and other iris heraldry were carried into battle during the Crusades. It can be found in tapestries, mosaics and pottery of the period both in Europe and the Crusaders holdings in the Middle East. The Fleur-de-lis is also used in today's Boy Scouts emblem.

During the Dark Ages, dried iris rhizomes, Orris Root, was cultivated in France and Italy for use in medicines, perfumes and fragrances. The nobility and wealthy used dried rhizomes in their laundry to add fragrances to bed linens and clothing. Stay tuned for more iris history in our next issue.

#### **Rebloomers in Members Gardens 2015**

Again and Again  
Autumn Circus  
Bernice's Legacy  
Boundless  
Clarence  
Double Your Fun  
Harvest of Memories  
Immortality  
Just Call Me  
Kind Hearted  
Marty Richards



Rosalie Figge—Barb