

# Prescott Area Iris Society

Volume 14 Issue 1

February 2017



## President's Message February 2017

Greetings to All,

Our new board met in January and we have a great lineup for this year. Our PAIS year is about to begin with our General Meeting on February 18th. Our general meetings will be packed with great information about irises and gardening in the Prescott area. Please look at the schedule in the newsletter and in your membership handbook for more information.

The new sprinkler system has been installed in the Sculpture Garden at Yavapai College and we will be able to begin the expansion this spring of the gardens to include the Spurias Collection of Dr Charles Jenkins and other Arizona Spurias hybridizers. Additional bearded irises will also be planted.

Our PAIS Scholarship for Yavapai College has been accepted and funded. See additional information in the newsletter concerning this exciting opportunity to give back to the community for two horticultural students at the college.

We are also awaiting word from Embry Riddle University on their expansion of their Memorial Garden in which they have asked us to plant additional irises.

Due to the efforts of Diane Thornbrugh a Master Gardener volunteering at Sharlot Hall our relations at the museum are improving and we look forward to a renewed cooperation between PAIS and the Museum. Diane is our new PAIS coordinator at the Museum.

We have been asked by the Citizen Cemetery to do

some thinning at the cemetery this year.

We may do a dig before the Show this spring and use the irises for the sale.

We are looking forward to another good financial year to help support our outreach projects and the new scholarship fund. Tell all your friends about our activities, events, and what we do in the community. Word of mouth is our best public relations we can provide. Invite people to the meetings and activities. We can always use new members and a few more hands in the club.

Now is the time for us to look at revitalizing our gardens. Those who have not pulled off the dead fans or did not do a fall cleanup should look at beginning this process now for spring. It will not be too much longer before we begin to see signs of new growth. We have had significant moisture this winter which our irises love. It should be a great year for irises. Sharon and I usually do our first fertilization with 10-10-10 now in Mid February and then again with 6-24-24 during the middle to end of March to give the irises a good boost for spring bloom in late April and early May. Watch for those Thrips and Aphids as the weather begins to warm.

Sharon's health continues to improve. Sharon and I look forward to seeing you all at the February meeting.

Best Regards to All,  
Dennis Luebkin



## Membership Update -

Last Chance—

If you haven't paid your renewal to PAIS bring money to Saturday meeting. This is your last newsletter if you haven't paid by the end of this month you will be dropped from membership.

## Where's the Dirt?

Ever wonder what's in those plastic bags of garden "soil" at the Big Box Stores? I do, and I don't think it's dirt...sure doesn't look like it! I met Steve Miller, owner of The Native Garden in Prescott, when we both attended Yavapai County Extension Agency's Master Gardener Program in 2013. Being dirt-challenged at our home in Prescott Valley, I asked Steve where he got his dirt. He told me about Prescott Dirt on Willow Creek Road next to Affinity RV. They locally source the dirt behind their business adjacent to Willow Lake. Steve uses it in his raised garden beds at his commercial garden. Problem solved!

Prescott Dirt is a family-owned business, and recently opened a second location in Prescott Valley (yay for me!). The PV location is the only one open on Saturday mornings from 8-12. And, if you don't need a ton of dirt, you can bring your own shovel and 5-gallon heavy duty plastic buckets to the PV location, and fill them with any of their bin materials for \$3 per bucket. PV only carries their planter's mix (70% screened top-soil, 30% mulch). So, if you want to amend the soil yourself, you can buy any amount at the Prescott location. They will load up your truck or trailer and figure out the cost (they have both the dirt and Planter's Mix at their Prescott location).

Contact Information:

Both Prescott Dirt locations are open Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm.

The Prescott Valley location is also open on Saturdays from 8:00am to 12:00 pm.

Prescott Location 4229 Willow Creek Rd, Prescott, AZ 86301

Prescott Valley Location 7563 E Highway 69, Prescott Valley, AZ 86314

Mailing Address: PO BOX 6029, Chino Valley, AZ 86323

Prescott Office (928) 636-5844

Prescott Valley Office (928) 775-9030

Fax Number: (928) 636-6576

E-mail: [prescottdirt@cableone.net](mailto:prescottdirt@cableone.net)

<http://www.prescottdirtcom/> [http://](http://www.prescottdirt.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/PRICE-SHEET.pdf)

[www.prescottdirt.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/PRICE-SHEET.pdf](http://www.prescottdirt.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/PRICE-SHEET.pdf)



No Iris yet, but crocus are blooming... by Barb McCurry

Remember, dirt is heavy. We built a 12x4x2 foot raised garden bed last summer and it took 2 tons of dirt that we amended ourselves. We had about four 5-gallon buckets left over that came in handy for other gardening projects.

Now that you have the "dirt", how about some fertilizer? It's almost time to feed and water your iris. As a reminder, all fertilizer labels have three bold numbers. The first number is the amount of nitrogen (N), the second number is the amount of phosphate (P2O5) and the third number is the amount of potash (K2O). These three numbers represent the primary nutrients: nitrogen(N); phosphorus(P); potassium(K), or NPK.

We are in luck as Ewing Irrigation in Prescott Valley sells 50 pound bags of Best 6-24-24XB Winterizing Fertilizer (also good for lawns) and perfect for early spring iris feedings. This fertilizer is high in Phosphorus that is essential for healthy large flowers. Ewing is a wholesale seller, so you need to tell them you're with the Prescott Area Iris Society. You can call for a current price at 928-775-9803 or head over to their storefront at 8267 E Pecos Drive, Prescott Valley off Robert Road. They are open M-F from 7:00 to 5:00 and closed on weekends.

Happy Irising, Barb McCurry

## Winter Iris Care

Carolyn Alexander

Your irises are currently taking a winter break, but will be putting on new growth for spring bloom mid-February or early March. There is not a lot to do but you may want to check your iris beds for heaving or buried rhizomes caused by freeze-thaws. Feel the rhizomes to check for rot. If soft, pull up the rhizome, cut off the rot, sprinkle with comet cleanser, let dry for several days and replant. At the same time you can gently pull off any dead leaves which may keep the thrips or aphids from laying eggs at the base of these leaves.

You will want to fertilize early in the year; but not if the ground is still frozen as the plant cannot utilize the fertilizer when frozen. Use a fertilizer, such as 10-10-10 Arizona's Best Multi-purpose fertilizer; it is available at Lowe's, Ace Hardware and other garden centers. Depending on the weather and the temperature you might want to wait until March to fertilize the first time. The earliest to feed the irises would be mid-February. A second application in late March should contain phosphate. Use triple super phosphate or Best 6-24-10. The middle number is your phosphate percentage and will create great bloom production. Most rose food will reflect this ratio.

As the weather begins to warm' you will need to check to determine if the ground is dry by digging down 3 inches. If the ground is dry, give the iris a deep watering. While we are getting weekly rain or snow you won't need to water.

If growing iris is new to you check out our web site for complete iris care from our February 2016 issue by Dennis Luebkin. Go to: Prescott Area Iris Society, newsletters, Feb. 2016 page 5. This is a full page of complete care for this time of year.

Happy iris gardening!

## Happy Birthday to.....

### January, February & March



Trying to catch up and get ahead....

January 9th	Sandra Hennigan	February 14th	Audrey Velonis	March 14th	Marilyn McCarthy
January 11th	Clarisa Reynolds	February 17th	Bill Walter	March 14th	Vera Stewart
January 11th	Kathleen Shaffer	February 23rd	Diane Thornburgh	March 17th	Gerald Mitchell
January 13th	JD Greenberg	March 2nd	Elaine Fleming	March 27th	Judy Book
January 19th	Barbara McCurry	March 4th	Peter Meinholz	March 29th	Sharon Simnacher
February 1st	Candis Peters	March 9th	Stan Book	March 30th	Ruth Simons
February 3rd	Joseph Meinholz	March 13th	Victoria VanKlombenburg	March 31st	Nancy Simpkins
February 3rd	Catherine VanKlombenburg	March 11th	Loretta Bresof		

## Coming Events

February	18	Ken Lain Companion Plants and Bees in the Garden + Potluck + white elephant exchange
April	29	Spring Show Preparation
May	5	Exhibit Setup - Mortimer Nursery
May	6	Spring Iris Exhibit, Kaleidoscope of Color - Mortimer Nursery
June	10	Steve Miller - Native Garden
July	16-21	Public Gardens Iris Dig
July	22	Marking Party
July	28	Sale Setup - Yavapai Title
July	29	Rhizome Sale 10:00 am - 3:00 pm Yavapai Title
August	12	Iris care class/new member training - Mortimer Nursery
August	19	Iris Photo Contest/Auction/Ice Cream Social
September	16	Eric Moore Birds in the Garden
October		No Meeting
November	18	Elections/ Potluck Speaker TBA
December		No Meeting



I just finished this painting of a very old iris called Ola Kala (1945). Bill and Katy, I think I gave it to you to grow from my historic garden. Enjoy a peak at a very pretty iris from the past. I may not be able to garden like I used to, but I can still enjoy the irises through photos and painting. Have a great day.  
Carolyn

### CONTACT US

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Newsletter: Vicki Hughes [vimticki@hotmail.com](mailto:vimticki@hotmail.com)

PAIS website: <http://prescottirissociety.org/>

**Treasurer's Summary Report for FY 2016**

YTD

<b>Beginning Balance (01/01/16)</b>	
Checking Account	\$15,492.24
Savings Account	\$1,811.99
Petty Cash	\$196.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17,500.83</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	
Member Dues (includes dues from December 2015)	\$645.00
Retail Sales (markers, books, postcards, aprons, etc)	\$525.00
Iris Sales (includes potted & rhizomes; Spring Show, Rhizome Sale, etc.)	\$11,319.24
Silent Auction	\$366.00
Dividend (Checking Account & Savings Account)	\$4.57
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$12,859.81</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
AIS PAIS affiliation & dues for Exec. Board (some paid 2015)	\$150.00
Silent Auction proceeds to Region 15	\$388.48
Community Service/education: classroom, etc.	\$0.00
Garden Tour	\$277.00
Gifts/Donations (Sculpture Garden, Citizens Cemetery, Sharlot Hall, etc.)	\$1,750.00
Mail Box rental (paid 2015 & 2016)	\$126.00
Meeting/program expenses-supplies, food (incl. Board Meetings)	\$1,636.00
Newsletter (printing & postage)	\$225.18
Office supplies/Admin. Costs (incl. gen'l postage)	\$61.26
Membership Handbooks	\$300.37
Retail Sales (incl. markers, iris culture booklets, etc.)	\$387.75
Rhizome Sale expenses	\$430.70
Sculpture Garden	\$765.15
Spring Iris Show - non juried (people's choice)	\$1,017.72
Storage unit rental & Supplies-paid in March annually	\$605.00
Travel expenses for Exec. Board	\$320.00
Website hosting & maintenance	\$500.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$8940.61</b>
<b>Ending Balances 12/31/2106</b>	
<b>CHECKING ACCOUNT</b>	<b>\$17,945.06</b>
<b>SAVINGS ACCOUNT</b>	<b>\$1,812.90</b>
<b>Petty Cash</b>	<b>\$125.00</b>
<b>Balance in all Accounts</b>	<b>\$19,882.96</b>

Respectfully Submitted, Eugene Zielinski, Treasurer PAIS

Arilbred Irises: A Little History - Posted: 07 Nov 2016  
06:43 AM PST Tom Waters



**'Brash and Bold'** (Black, 2009), William Mohr medal  
2106 (arilbred median)

The story of arilbreds begins in the late 19th century, when the exotic aril iris species of the Middle East found their way into the gardens of European plant enthusiasts. Sir Michael Foster, England's foremost iris expert at the time, tried his hand at crossing the arils with the more familiar tall bearded (TB) irises. His motives were mainly exploratory; at the time, no one knew if the arils and bearded irises were compatible, or whether desirable garden plants might result from crossing them.

Although these early arilbreds were interesting plants, showing features of both parents, they were also quite sterile. Arils and TBs were just too distantly related to produce fertile offspring when crossed. One might expect hybridizers to simply give up on the idea, but many kept trying. The allure of the arils, with their huge globular blooms, often strikingly marked with velvety signals, veins, and stippling, was not something to be lightly set aside. Also, the arils themselves were difficult to grow in England and much of the US, demanding very dry conditions when dormant in summer and winter. So the great hope was that crossing arils with TBs could produce an aril-like bloom on a plant that could grow in any garden where TBs grow.

The famous iris breeder William Mohr, working in California, produced an arilbred iris that seemed close to fulfilling this dream. Named for him posthumously in 1925 by his friend and fellow iris expert Sidney Mitchell, the iris 'William Mohr' was an instant sensation. Its large blooms and wide falls, inherited from its aril parent *Iris gatesii*, proved irresistible in an era when most TBs had relatively small, narrow flowers.



**'Elmohr'**

Like the other arilbreds of similar pedigree, '**William Mohr**' was essentially sterile. But it was so popular that hybridizers all over the country kept making crosses with it, ever hopeful. And occasionally '**William Mohr**' would reward such persistence by producing a seed or two. We now understand that these seeds were the result of unreduced gametes, where an ovule is produced by bypassing the normal cell division. Usually it was TB pollen used in making these crosses, so the resulting seedlings were 1/4 aril. '**Mohrson**' and '**Grace Mohr**' were the first introduced, in 1935, launching a tradition of working "Mohr" into the name of these arilbreds. One of these, '**Elmohr**' (P. A. Loomis, 1942) became the first and only arilbred to win the Dykes Medal. In this way, William Mohr became associated with the "quarterbreds" (arilbreds of 1/4 aril ancestry), even though he himself never produced any irises of this type.

Although less widely appreciated than the famous '**William Mohr**', there was actually one truly fertile arilbred in cultivation at this time, '**Ib-Mac**' produced by the Dutch firm of Van Tubergen and introduced in 1910. Unreduced gametes were once again involved, as its aril parent *Iris iberica* produced an ovule with two sets of aril chromosomes instead of the usual one. '**Ib-Mac**' thus ended up as a balanced tetraploid, with two sets of aril chromosomes and two sets of bearded chromosomes, a configuration that is usually fertile.

Crossing 'William Mohr' with 'Ib-Mac' produced the fertile arilbred 'Capitola' (Frank Reinelt, 1940). Many hybridizers now began using 'Capitola' pollen on TBs, a much surer way to produce quarterbreds than hoping for the occasional seed from 'William Mohr'. These quarterbreds were also colloquially referred to as "Mohrs".

The frustration for hybridizers of this era was that although one could produce quarterbreds by crossing

'William Mohr', 'Ib-Mac', or 'Capitola' with TBs, there was no easy way to get more arils into the mix. The quarterbreds only showed moderate aril characteristics, and did not go very far in capturing the appeal of the aril species themselves.



**'Oyez'**

The great breakthrough in arilbred breeding came from the work of Clarence G. White in the 1940s. Based in southern California, he was able to grow many pure arils and use them extensively in his hybridizing. His early hybrids, such as the perennially popular 'Oyez' (White, 1938), were infertile diploids, but eventually fertile arilbreds began to appear among his seedlings. The first to be introduced was 'Joppa Parrot' (White, 1948). In the decade that followed, a steady stream of fertile arilbreds in a remarkable range of colors and patterns issued from White's garden. We do not know exactly how this happened, because by this time White had given up on keeping records of his crosses, claiming it took too much time away from making the actual crosses. Most likely it was the sheer volume of his breeding program that made these breakthroughs possible. With an enormous number of seedlings, even unlikely events such as unreduced gametes are bound to happen from time to time. The fertile C. G. White arilbreds were later shown to be balanced tetraploids (like 'Ib-Mac' and 'Capitola') with two sets of aril chromosomes and two sets of TB chromosomes.

The 1950s saw the founding of the Aril Society International (ASI). Despite the name, its membership was largely concentrated in southern California, with a few in New Mexico and elsewhere. The ASI in its early years provided a much-needed framework for defining the arilbred class and encouraging the breeding of arilbreds with clear, strong aril flower characteristics. To be classified as an arilbred, an iris could have no less than 1/4 aril ancestry. Hybridizers had often crossed the early quarterbreds back to TBs,

sometimes for several generations, promoting the progeny as "arilbreds", although their aril genes had in most cases dropped by the wayside, leaving plants that were for all intents and purposes just TBs. The ASI cooperated with the American Iris Society to establish the C. G. White award for best arilbred in 1961. In 1969, the William Mohr award was added for arilbreds of less than 1/2 aril ancestry, restricting the C. G. White award to those that are 1/2 or more aril. This further encouraged hybridizers to focus on arilbreds with strong aril characteristics. Both these awards attained medal status in 1993.

With the "fertile family" of C. G. White arilbreds firmly established, arilbred breeding at last came into its own. As breeders continued to work with these fertile arilbreds, they improved both in gardenability and in the form, color, and pattern of the flowers themselves. The original C. G. White hybrids typically had only a small diffuse signal patch, and veining that was indistinct and blended. Through the extended effort of dedicated arilbred hybridizers, we now have arilbreds with huge, dramatic signals, striking crisp veining, and an extraordinary range of bright clear colors.



**'Anacrusis'**

Most fertile arilbreds today derive almost entirely from the original C. G. White introductions. A few notable additions to the family appeared subsequently: 'Welcome Reward' (Sundt, 1971), Henry Danielson's fertile regeliabreds such as 'Genetic Artist' (Danielson, 1972), and Harald Mathes's fertile arilbred medians beginning with 'Anacrusis' (Mathes, 1992). Fertile arilbred seedlings produced by Samuel Norris from his tetraploid arils crossed with TBs also appear in the pedigrees of some modern arilbreds. The fertile "C. G. White type" arilbreds have also opened up other new areas of arilbred breeding. Crossed with TBs, they have given us quarterbreds that are much more aril-like than the old "Mohrs", and crossed with the standard dwarf bearded (SDB) irises, they have produced the charming arilbred medians, which are at least as popular as the taller quarterbreds today. The history of arilbred breeding has progressed from an early period of difficulty and frustration, through the breakthrough of C. G. White's "fertile family" to a modern era of continual improvement and expanding diversity. What will the future bring?



## PAIS Scholarship for Horticultural students at Yavapai College

Hi All,

1/26/17

I wanted to get back with everyone concerning the PAIS Scholarship for a horticultural student at Yavapai College. I had a very good meeting with the Yavapai College Foundation this morning. The previous Executive Director of the Yavapai College Foundation, Steve Walker has retired and his assistant Janice Soutee has moved into a new position at the college. I met with Paul Kirchgraber Interim Executive Director of the Foundation who is also the Colleges Director of Development. I also met with Mary Talosi who is the Donor Relations Manager and assistant to Paul Kirchgraber.

As you are all aware our donation to the college was \$1,000 dollars which we will need to modify to a total of \$1,050 to cover the colleges 5% or \$50.00 administration fee for the Scholarship.

The good news is that the Agricultural/Horticultural Dept. has never had a scholarship program and are very excited that we are creating this scholarship for a horticultural student, a first at the college. In discussions with Paul and Mary it was indicated that the cost for students are low at the college and they asked PAIS to consider supporting two horticultural students inclusive of the same donation amount of \$1,000.00. Therefore, each of the two students would receive \$250.00 per semester which would cover tuition and books for a semester. I believe that this is a wonderful benefit. The \$1,000.00 available would then cover two students for two semesters. The distribution of the funds would begin for the fall semester of 2017 and would also cover the spring semester of 2018. We would need to contribute additional funds at the beginning of 2018 to continue the scholarship for another year. On behalf of PAIS I agreed to support the two students for the same original donation. The final paperwork was modified to reflect the same and I signed the document for PAIS.

I would like to congratulate PAIS on taking this step to create a horticultural scholarship which will affect the lives and education of two students.

Best Regards,

Dennis

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### *Email from Yavapai College. received early January, 2017*

Thank you for all that PAIS does for Yavapai College, our students and the community. The society has done an amazing job of creating a place of beauty and enjoyment for the college community and the public. To have the prestigious national historic designation for the collection is something that we can all be very proud of.

Looking forward to working with you in continuing to make the sculpture garden a point-of-pride for our community.

Best always,

Paul

Paul Kirchgraber  
Interim Executive Director

