



NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2021

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Prescott Iris Roundup Region 15 Fall Meeting 2021

On Saturday, October 23, a full house of 46 iris wranglers from five of Region 15’s ten clubs gathered at the Prescott Rodeo Grounds ~ Home of the World’s Oldest Rodeo ~ to share our enthusiasm for iris. Out-of-town guests, who had traveled from all over Arizona and southern California, as well as our local PAIS members arrived at the historic Freeman Building in time for breakfast.

The PAIS Conference team, headed by Brenda Griffin, did a wonderful job of planning the event and preparing the charming, old stone building as a welcoming venue. Attendees received burlap gift bags and name tags upon arrival, along with numbered tickets for gift drawings. Everyone was able to select a potted gift iris with a named western theme to take home. The silent auction and raffle offerings included iris - tall bearded and spuria, gardening gift buckets, western decor, handmade and collectible art items along with fine art and photography, to tempt us all.

The day’s activities began with the annual Region 15 executive board meeting conducted by Janis Shackelford, Region 15 Vice President. Also present were Cheryl Deaton, Treasurer; Beth Train, Assistant RVP & Judges chair; and Sue Brown, Historian. During the executive board meeting, we learned from Sue Brown of the need to recover and recreate digital versions of AIS Region 15 historic records, much of which were lost to water damage in the prior historians garage. If you know of particularly interesting Region 15 historic tidbits, please let her know.

The board meeting was followed by an interesting, informative presentation on tall bearded and spuria iris breeding efforts by our guest speaker, iris hybridizer Jim Hedgecock, owner of Comanche Acres Iris Gardens. Most members grow tall bearded iris and are at least somewhat aware of impressive breeding advances made over a century of hybridization that has lead to 100K named cultivars!! In comparison, Spuria iris breeding is in its infancy with only 800-1000 registered cultivars to date. Some exciting breakthroughs are being made with spuria like ruffled edges, line patterns, glowing signals or their total elimination, and new color variations.

Jim encouraged all of us to “give spuria iris a try” as they are not difficult to grow. The main cultural differences between tall bearded iris are spurias need for manure rich, but well draining soil; deeper planting (about two inches under the soil) with a mulch; resent transplanting; summer dormancy; tolerate partial shade, especially in areas that have extremely hot summers like parts of Arizona experience. Check out the spuria iris site to learn more: <https://spuriairissociety.org/culture>



Brenda and Tony Griffin



Jim Hedgecock and Gary Miller



Table centerpiece By Dennis Luebkin

Photo credits top to bottom: Brenda Griffin, Gary Miller, Cynthe Brush

Prescott Iris Round Up cont.

Mid-day, we paused for a delicious western BBQ lunch catered by Steve Orosz. The menu included pulled pork, light or dark spicy chicken, buns, baked beans and coleslaw (including a vegan option), with chocolate chip cookies for dessert.

Jim Hedgecock had invited conference participants to a tall bearded vs spuria 'Shootout' panel after lunch, but not enough of us had spuria growing experience to participate in a debate, so Jim took that time to educate us a bit more.

A number of Louisiana iris were shared by Phoenix based Sun Country Iris, who had just divided their collection. Gary Miller, a member of both Sun Country and PAIS clubs, and a Louisiana iris hybridizer, explained their cultural requirements to us - the essential need of never drying out, growing in water soaked, constantly damp soil, along with tips on how to accomplish that in our gardens.



Silent auction iris

During breaks in the presentations, before and after lunch, participants studied the Silent Auction and Raffle offerings bidding on items they hoped to take home. Several folks used the opportunity to do some early Christmas shopping, too! At the end of the day, everyone listened with eager anticipation to see who won which iris and other treasures. Clapping with enthusiasm even occasionally dancing little jigs or sighing in resignation, depending on who won which items. All in all, it was a good gathering and great day. *Cynthe Brush*



Raffle items by Cynthe Brush

President's Message

Well, Howdy folks! Our Region 15 Fall Round-up on the 23rd was a resounding success thanks to our committee chair, Brenda Griffin and the outstanding volunteers that have put in over a year of work to bring it to fruition. Our speaker, Jim Hedgecock, was amazing and we learned a great deal about the differences between spuria and tall bearded iris. We had a delicious BBQ lunch and wonderful raffle and silent auction. It was a wonderful day spent with folks from all over Arizona & southern California. Always fun to show off our town.

We were sorry to learn of the passing of Francelle Edwards, a wonderful iris hybridizer from Phoenix. Many of our members knew her and we have an area at the Sculpture Garden displaying her introductions. The board approved a donation of \$250.00 to the Nature Conservancy in her honor.

Part of the Sculpture Garden is being renovated by the college and it was necessary for us to remove our irises from that area (including the Francelle Edwards irises). All of those removed have been potted and are being plant sat by Brenda Griffin until they can be replanted in the spring. Thank you to everyone that quickly dug the irises (Sandra and Linda) and then went to Brenda's and helped to get them potted.

The **November meeting** is scheduled for the 20th at the Stoneridge Community Center starting at 1:30 PM. We will be having our elections for the 2022 board, (see nominees page 4). We are pleased to have Eric Moore with Jay's Bird Barn as our speaker. The topic will be plants that attract birds to your yard and garden. We will also have some exceptionally wonderful items to raffle, so hopefully everyone will be able to attend the last meeting for 2021.

The AIS 2022 National Convention is scheduled for April 11 – 16 in Las Cruces, NM. The website for information is <https://ais-2022.square.site/>.

The Region 15 Spring Trek will be held in San Diego on April 22 – 23, 2022. Information on the Spring Trek will be provided when available.

Enjoy the fall colors and we'll see you on **November 20th**. *Sherry*

In Memoriam



**Francelle
Edwards**
1925 - 2021



Cloud Reflection Edwards 2006



Leta Lorraine Edwards 2009



Rachel Julia Edwards 2006

Photos of all her iris may be located by clicking on the links. ['Anasazi Legend'](#), ['Cloud Reflection'](#), ['Coral Dancer'](#), ['Desert Aria'](#), ['Desert Roundelay'](#), ['Desert Sonata'](#), ['Flight Of Fairies'](#), ['Gary Petterson'](#), ['Leta Lorraine'](#), ['Lilac Morning'](#), ['Love For Mary'](#), ['Midnight Kitty'](#), ['Rachel Julia'](#), ['Red Velvet Nights'](#), ['Sara Rose'](#), ['Song Of Olwen'](#), ['Stormy Sunrise'](#), ['Toltec Talisman'](#), ['Vilja'](#)

My first introduction to Francelle was at the Prescott Public Library in 2002. She and members of the Phoenix Sun Country Iris Society came to Prescott regularly to interest us in iris and to gently encourage us to form our own club. Francelle gave two memorable presentations that year, grooming iris for a show and iris hybridizing. She was a knowledgeable AIS judge, full of enthusiasm that was positively contagious.

Francelle had always loved iris and she began hybridizing in her late 70's and with her first success, she was hooked. Francelle's first iris introductions in 2006 were Cloud Reflection, Flight of Fairies and Rachel Julia. Her last introduction Vilja, was in 2016. She introduced 19 iris in 10 years. The sculpture garden has all of her iris introductions and they are usually the first ones to bloom.

PEACE

Isolate me with quiet things:
Meadows of new mown hay,
The humming bees in the hollyhocks,
Blooming roses.
Give me orchard stillness where doves
are nesting.
Give me a fertile garden with rain calling
forth the flowers.
In these and in the dew of sunrise,
In the wind that stirs the green blades
And a small stream flowing,
There is peace.

Francelle Edwards

The annual election takes place at the November 20 meeting.



Nominated Slate of Officers

President: Dennis Luebkin
1st VP: Vicki Hughes
2nd VP: Marty Boxer
Secretary: Jeri Conklin
Membership: Robin Walter
Treasurer: Sherry Williams, Tony Griffin
Director at Large: Kathleen Schaffer
Newsletter: Jean Brennan, Janet Chabolla
Hospitality: Deb Wade, Cheryl Giovenco
Publicity: Dennis Luebkin, Sandra Schilling
Guardian Gardens Chairperson: Brenda Griffin

Membership Renewals

Recently you received a membership list via email (in lieu of our annual handbook) with your details including your membership renewal date. We will be having our very informative 2022 Handbook printed early in the new year, so be sure you renew **by the end of this year** so that you can be included in the handbook and receive it too. Don't forget to let us know if any of your details change.

If your membership is due you can either send a check made out to 'PAIS' with memo for 'Membership' to Prescott Area Iris Society, PO Box 11918, Prescott, AZ 86304, or if you prefer to pay via PayPal, you can email Sherry Williams at duckwalkdesigns@gmail.com for information. Fees are \$12.00 for 1 year or \$30.00 for three years.

Robin Walter, Membership Chairman

CONTACT US

President: Sherry Williams duckwalkdesigns@gmail.com
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Sculpture Garden: Dennis Luebkin dluebkin@g.com
Hospitality: (Temp - Prescott Area Iris Society
Sherry, Amy & Loretta) P.O. Box 11918, Prescott AZ 86304
Newsletter: Judy Book <http://prescottirissociety.org>
jbookaz@gmail.com

November/December Birthdays

Nov 4	Gloria Bowers
Nov 21	Mary Soriano
Dec 2	Terry Kyte
Dec 7	Eugene Zielinski
Dec 9	Sandra Schilling
Dec 10	Marge Larson
Dec 20	Carolyn Alexander

Sharlot Hall Museum and PAIS

Sharlot Hall Museum is one of two public grounds, along with Yavapai College, registered with the Historical Iris Preservation Society (HIPS). This important status was obtained in 2018. There are several iris beds at Sharlot Hall Museum maintained by PAIS, with over 85 cultivars of iris rhizomes.

The original beds were planted near the back Summit entrance, around the Schoolhouse and Fort Misery by PAIS in 2013. These historic iris date from pre-1800's to around the lifetime of Sharlot Hall, 1870-1943. Some of the classic historic iris were selected as an overall representation of the evolution of iris up to the time of Sharlot Hall. Some special varieties like Demi-Deuil commemorate the 1912 Arizona statehood and recognize Sharlot's efforts to make statehood a reality.

Recent plantings include Beowulf 1936, the first true maroon iris; Perfection 1880, Barr & Sons, a beautiful light blue/violet which is more rare and picky; Blueboy IB 1913, Foster, with a special blue beard! I am still searching for the elusive Rose Unique IB 1910 Farr - rather low inventory it seems. Sharlot Hall died in 1943, and we have the abundant Easter Bonnet 1943, representing Sharlot's last year. There are many beautiful historic iris to enjoy and treasure.

A later bed planted in 2018 on the south side of Fremont house is a collection of the Grace Sturtevant iris. Grace lived during an uncannily parallel time with Sharlot Hall, and was the first American woman to hybridize iris. The character of many of her iris are soft and fragile with delicate colors, very beautiful. Most of these rhizomes were donated by members of the Historic Iris Preservation Society to preserve the Sturtevant collection. Recent additions from HIPS were hard to find True Charm 1920, and the iris "Grace Sturtevant", hybridized by Bliss.

We have a newly formed Sharlot Hall Museum team that will be helping to maintain the beds by weeding, fertilizing, and verifying the varieties when blooming, photographing, and replanting new rhizomes as skunks dig them up looking for grubs! Members of our team are leader Diane Thornbrugh, Dennis Luebkin, Sandra Schilling and her very helpful mom Linda, Marty Boxer, Cynthe Brush, and Marilyn Wiley. The team has been encouraged to grow some of the Sharlot Hall Museum iris in their own yards, so that if we lose rhizomes at Sharlot Hall Museum, we will have back-ups. All PAIS members are encouraged to participate next year with our team, as we will be dividing some of the larger clumps that were last separated July 2017.

Sharlot Hall Museum is a fun and beautiful place to work and enjoy. I thank all who have participated in keeping these iris beds beautiful for the public to enjoy and for maintaining beds that PAIS can be proud of, upholding a solid reputation in the iris community. We have been granted the privilege of maintaining iris beds by the grounds management at Sharlot Hall Museum and want to live up to this honor.

Article and photos Diane Thornbrugh



Iris at the Richard Marcusen Sculpture Garden: a work in progress

Part of the mission of the Prescott Area Iris Society (PAIS) is to “stimulate an interest in irises not only for its members but also the public throughout the Prescott Area and state of Arizona. What better way to achieve this than to create public iris gardens for the community to view and enjoy! We now have three: the Sculpture Garden at Yavapai College, Sharlot Hall Museum Historic Iris Garden, and the Fire Fighters Memorial Garden at Embry-Riddle University, dedicated to the Granite Mountain Hot Shots. Our success with these gardens is due to the dedication of our volunteer members who work each year to groom, fertilize, divide, and replant the iris.

Our main and largest garden is in the Richard Marcusen Sculpture Garden* at Yavapai College. A total garden area of six acres is a place of tranquility, peace and beauty. It includes a diverse collection of contemporary sculpture, native plants, and irises.

The Sculpture Garden is one of the few gardens of its type in the nation. A joint effort of Yavapai College and the Prescott Area Iris Society, it is a treasure in the Prescott area. In 2016 the Sculpture Garden was honored with the distinction of becoming an American Iris Society National Display Garden and was also designated a Historic Iris Display Garden by the Historic Iris Preservation Society. PAIS and Yavapai College were honored to receive these national designations for the garden. The Sculpture Garden is one of only a handful of public gardens across the country created by a local iris society.

The Sculpture Garden iris plantings began in 2006. The creation of the William R. Dykes Medal Iris Garden followed in 2010. The planting of the Francelle Edwards Garden to honor one of Arizona’s premier iris hybridizers was begun in 2010 and enlarged in 2017. The garden was expanded in 2013 to include the Children’s Storybook Garden and the Black Iris Garden along with additional plantings of irises donated by the Verde Valley Iris Society

Additional expansion began in 2016 when Yavapai College asked if we could extend the iris plantings to other areas of the Sculpture Garden. We began this expansion with the hopes of creating gardens dedicated to the hybridization work of Arizona Hybridizers. These Honor Garden areas have been dedicated to the iris hybrids of Francelle Edwards, Margie Valenzuela, Don Shepard, Larry Johnsen, Floyd Wickenkamp, and Dr. B. Charles Jenkins. Additional garden areas have been dedicated to the historic work of Agnes Whiting, a mid-20th century hybridizer, and a western themed garden.

* The garden name is in recognition of Dick’s exemplary service to Yavapai College. He began teaching at YC in 1971 and was instrumental in establishing the Art Programs, Gallery, and Sculpture Garden.



Goosebumps Black



No Mas Dinero Jenkins



Devil's Spoon Shepard



Maytime Whiting

Sculpture garden cont.

PAIS has been searching and collecting the cultivars of these hybridizers for the past five years. The search has led down numerous paths trying to locate them from hybridizers family and friends to other collectors, and commercial growers. We have unfortunately found that many of these varieties of these cannot be found, and many may have become extinct.

This year our work in the sculpture garden consisted of digging, amending and replanting the Dykes Medal Garden, the Storybook Garden and the Black Iris Garden. Our plans for next year in conjunction with Yavapai College grounds department will be to continue to rework existing older beds and add new irises to the garden.

Since the garden is located adjacent to the theater, fine arts and music complex new irises have been obtained that have themed names for music, show tunes, art, dance, and literature. Iris have also been obtained which compliment the themes of the individual sculptures in the garden. These new irises will be planted and scattered throughout the garden area beginning in the spring of 2022 and continuing through 2023.



In an effort to enhance the total garden experience Yavapai College has recently created a new nature trail that extends into, along, and across the wash that runs through the garden. Pedestrian bridges and walkways will extend to the area west of the current garden. The college has asked if we would enhance portions of this trail with additional plantings.



Volunteering in the garden is no doubt work, but, when we all join in as a team to help sustain the garden, work becomes a social event. Many hands make light work to complete our efforts quickly. Many of us working in the Sculpture Garden have experienced the joy of the thanks and appreciative comments from the

community, staff and students that are drawn to and enjoy the gardens. To join the team contact Dennis Luebkin, dluebkin@q.com.

Our thanks to all those members past and present who volunteered to keep our gardens beautiful. The college, the community and the American Iris Society appreciate what we do. Our gardens are truly a work in progress and a national example of what can be accomplished with irises.



Best to All,
Dennis Luebkin, Garden Chairperson

Photo credit Dennis Luebkin

WINTER IRIS CARE

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 7,900 ft. to 3,500 ft. Because of the diversity of climate zones the conditions for caring for irises vary somewhat along with the time periods that we do our seasonal work.

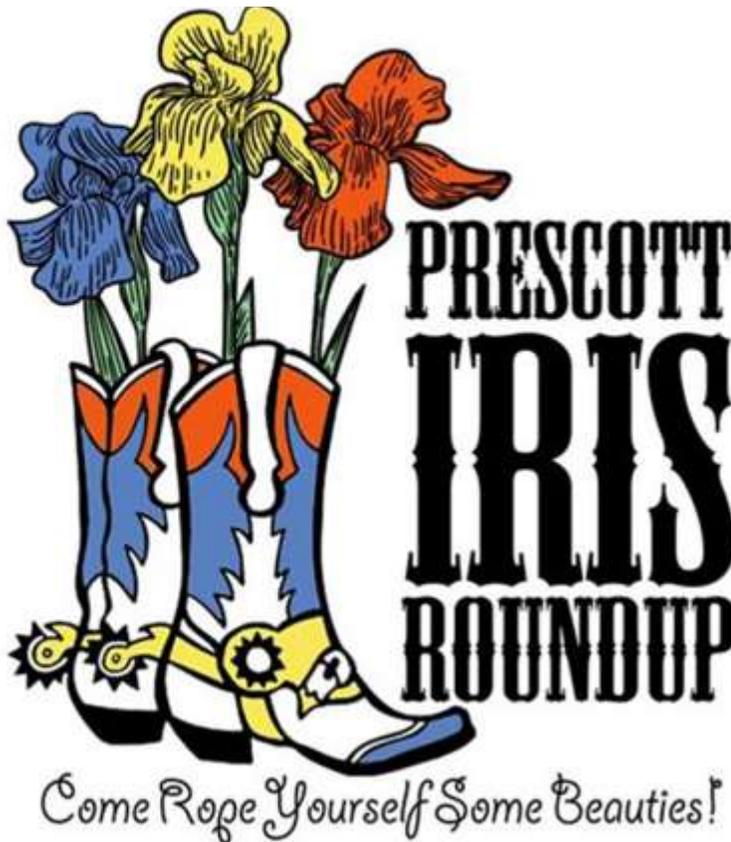
In general our fall and winter care should be as follows:

- **Cleaning and Weeding:** Keep your iris beds free of dead leaves and weeds. In warmer areas, leaves will begin to brown. In our colder areas leaves have already wilted from the freezing temperatures. Grooming and cleaning irises 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).
- Remove the dead leaves by pulling or cutting. One thing to note is that the leaves that are not dead or dying back are still producing food for the rhizome during the fall and winter, so exercise care in fan removal. If the leaves are dead, remove them since they may harbor the eggs of thrips and aphids.
- Check the rhizomes to ensure they are not covered or buried too deeply. Two things will happen during the freeze and 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. If this occurs, 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 rotting area and sprinkle a cleanser with bleach on the affected area. This will help dry out the rhizome and kill bacteria and fungus.
- **Mulching:** For those of us that 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 will be a good substitute. Other leaf and vegetative material are not advised since they decompose quickly and may cause the rhizomes to rot. Remove pine needles in the spring.
- **Fertilizing:** Don't fertilize at this time. You should wait until February. We try to fertilize by Valentine's Day as a bench mark. We call it "Love Your Iris Day" or at the latest, early March. If you live in a warmer climate zone such as Sedona, Camp Verde or Yarnell fertilizing in late January and early February is appropriate.

- One thing to note concerning one of our most favorite fertilizers. Some of the ingredients in “Bayer Systemic Rose and Flower Care”, which is used to control thrips and aphids, have been linked to the decrease in the honey bee population. We do not recommend using systemic insecticides.
- We recommend a multi-purpose food such as Arizona’s Best all purpose food 10-10-10 or Best 6-24-24XB which also contains sulfur and iron and is wonderful for producing bloom.
- **Watering:** Watering is dependent on 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. Check the soil moisture by digging down about 4 inches. If the ground is dry, give the iris a deep watering.
- **Composting:** Composting is a good off season task. Learning to compost is a way to add nutrients to the soil, while helping reduce landfill waste. For a thorough guide to composting which has been prepared by the Prescott Master Gardeners, check this link: <https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/attachment/BackyardCompostingPPT2021.pdf>

Dennis Luebkin

Visit these businesses and thank them for their support of our fall meeting raffle.



AZZ
Ace Hardware - Chino
Home Depot - Prescott
Home Depot - PV
In N Out
Jay's Bird Barn
PetSmart
Safeway - Chino
Safeway - Prescott
Safeway - PV
Sprouts - Prescott
Sprouts - PV
Starbucks - Prescott
Starbucks - PV
Statue-Esque
Target
Texas Roadhouse
Total Wine and More
Tractor Supply - Prescott
Tractor Supply - PV
Trader Joes
True Value
Winey Cat Vineyard

12th Annual Photo Contest Results

On Saturday, the 18th of September, we had a very busy general meeting at Stoneridge Community Center. We had a Silent Auction of some wonderful iris (is there any other kind)? We had an ice-cream social and of course we had our Annual Photo Contest.

Seems like there weren't a lot of blooms this past year, so people didn't take many photos. But the ones that were submitted did well for the photographers.

Category	Winner	Runner-up
Habitat/Landscape	Gary Miller	-
Individual/Cluster Same Iris	Gary Miller	Jeri Conklin & Cynthe Brush
Artistic	Cynthe Brush	Marty Boxer
Irises & Others	Gary Miller	Sandy Schilling

Congratulations to the photographers, you were all winners! But next year we need some more photos. Somebody needs to stop that Gary Miller! Come on photographers, you have been challenged!

Looking forward to next years crop - of irises and photos!

Robin Walter



Cynthe Brush

Gary Miller



Sandy Schilling, Marty Boxer, Cynthe Brush, Jeri Conklin

Photos—Sherry Williams