

Spring greetings to all,

After a long cold and dry winter, SPRING is here!!! A beautiful time of the year. Nature is looking alive again with flowers and green leaves after a long winter dormancy. Irises are starting to get ready for their big display. There is much to do now. Make sure you remove any debris, leaves and check your irises for aphids and thrips. Give them fertilizer (6-24-24) to boost their energy. We are now on track to have another in-person general meeting in April at Stoneridge Community Center. We will not be having a potluck; however, snacks, water and coffee will be available. Feel free to bring your own drinks or snacks. Our speaker will be our own Cynthe Brush who will speak on photographing iris and garden photography.

Our Spring Online Potted Sale will be on-line again this year. We will open our store on May 7th for club members and the general public on May 8th through May 14th. All of our potted iris from last year will be available for purchase and pick up will again be at Brenda Griffin's home. Pick up times will be the week of May 16th to May 21st. Our webstore address is [https:// paisirisstore.com/](https://paisirisstore.com/)

We will have an opportunity this spring to visit one of our local gardens! Marilyn Wiley from Bloomer-Rang Iris Gardens in Wilhoit will host an iris potluck luncheon on Friday April 29th and will be opening her gardens for us. Details in this newsletter.

Starting this year after bloom season we will begin the second phase of a two-year program to renovate the Sculpture Garden at Yavapai College. We will be adding amendment to existing iris beds, replanting areas affected by college construction work, working on the sprinkler system, and adding new irises. Join us at the April 23rd general meeting. This will be an exciting meeting with great information.

Best regards and happy gardening,

Dennis Luebkin



## **NEWSLETTER**

**APRIL**

**2022**

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## On Gardening & Photography ~ Cynthe Brush

I have loved nature ~ trees, flowers, and gardens ~ since I was 2-years-old. A decade of my childhood was spent in (West) Pakistan, India, and the Himalaya mountains where nature's magnificence surrounded us. In the 1950s, after 400 years of England's imperial occupation of the Indian subcontinent, cultivated gardens in that region were strongly influenced by British aesthetics: vast green lawns, high hedges for privacy, fragrant roses, graceful shade trees, and bright patches of colorful annuals ~ pansies, marigolds, snapdragons and more.

Photography, too, was woven into my life from the very beginning. My father, a talented photographer, recorded all our family experiences and my sister and my growing-up years in excellent black and white, and later, color images that he developed and printed himself.

Sixty years ago, when I was thirteen, my father gifted me and my sister our first film cameras. Curiously, Dad never really taught us how to photograph, expecting we would figure it out ourselves as we observed what we were interested in and figured out how to photograph those subjects. Honestly, I would have appreciated some tips!

Within a few months of getting that camera, I took photography classes, joined school photography clubs, and won competition awards in junior high and high school in Berkeley CA and my senior year in Easton CT.



Autumn Leaves



Red Peppers

I continued photography studies in college and junior

college using film cameras, development chemicals, learning darkroom techniques & printing skills, while learning about famous American photographers who worked in black and white ~ Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, Edward Steichen, and others.

My traditional photography education has made me a HUGE fan of digital cameras' accessibility, versatility, and instant visual feedback for improving our images.

I'm still learning to use sophisticated photo development software now available to any of us interested in mastering our craft...or at least experimenting with improving our images. As Ansel Adams often said, "A photograph is made, not taken."

Cynthe's upcoming April presentation on garden photography will address questions and issues such as:

- ~ Why do we photograph our gardens?
- ~ Focus and composition.
- ~ The color of light: morning vs. afternoon, sun vs. shadow, seeing and correcting color cast.
- ~ Digital photography challenges with cell phone cameras, highlights and shadows, excessive saturation.
- ~ Tools and techniques to improve your garden photography.
- ~ A brief discussion of photography as art, even though most folks use photography for documentation.
- ~ And any other questions you may have.



2-year-old Cindy and her baby sister Vicki are both captivated by a bright red hibiscus flower held by their Grandma Helen Brush.

## April 23 Meeting - Garden Photography

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StoneRidge Community Center 1:30



Backdraft-Embry Riddle



True Delight-  
Sharlot Hall  
Museum



Coronation  
Cynthe's  
Garden



Desert Sonata & Anazai Legend-Yavapai College



Swerti-Cynthe's Garden

**Photos— Cynthe Brush**

## IN MEMORIAM

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Luebkin,

It is with a heavy heart that I must report the loss of my mother, Joella Cheek, to you and your devoted Iris Society members.

She passed away in October from a white blood cell cancer called Multiple Myeloma at 86 years of age. Thankfully, she died peacefully during an afternoon nap in her own home, which was her final wish.

Her Iris beds gave her incredible joy and pride in her retirement years as did her affiliation with members of your club that shared that love of these beautiful bearded flowers.

We hope the new home owner will treasure and continue to garden my mother's Iris beds.

On behalf of the entire extended Cheek family, we thank you all for being an integral part of Joella's life and passion in Prescott.

Kindest regards,  
Marquand Cheek  
Living son of Joella Cheek

Editor's note: Joella was an industrious volunteer since she joined the club in 2006. She helped clean iris for the rhizome sales, cashiered or greeted visitors at iris exhibits and rhizome sales and was secretary for the board from 2015– 2017. Her gracious spirit and winning smile will be missed.



### CONTACTS

**President:** Dennis Luebkin  
**1st Vice President:** Marty Boxer  
**2nd Vice President:** Vicki Hughes  
**Secretary:** Jeri Conklin  
**Treasurer:** Sherry Williams  
**Director at Large:** Kathleen Shaffer  
**Membership:** Robin Walter  
**Publicity:** Dennis Luebkin, Sandra Schilling  
**Community Gardens:** Dennis Luebkin , Kathleen Shaffer, Diane Thornbrugh  
**Hospitality:** Deb Wade, Vicki Hughes

**Newsletter:** Jean Brennan  
**Guardian Gardens Coordinator:** Brenda Griffin

**Meeting Location: Stoneridge Community Center**  
**1300 Stoneridge Drive, Prescott Valley**

Prescott Area Iris Society  
P. O. Box 11918  
Prescott, AZ 86304

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1048378225226372>  
<https://prescottirissociety.org/president@prescottareairissociety.org>

## Spring Iris Care

Dennis Luebkin

Spring is right around the corner in the Prescott area. The buds on bushes and trees are beginning to swell. Our daytime temperatures are warming, night temperatures continue to remain cool. This is a perfect time for the irises to come out of dormancy and establish new growth. Here are some care tips for your Irises.

**Cleaning:** If you have not cleaned around your irises now is the time to do that. Remove dead fans and old bloom stalks. Also clean any leaf debris from around the rhizomes and remove any soil from the tops of the rhizomes caused by freeze thaw. Remember the rhizomes like light and air. This will also help prevent rhizome rot. If you should notice any soft rhizomes during cleanup, you can apply Ajax or similar powdered cleaner on top and around the rhizome. The chlorine will assist in killing the bacteria causing the rot. Remove weeds so they do not compete with the irises. Keep weeds and grasses under control.



**Fertilizing:** If you have not fertilized your irises, you can use Best 6-24-24 (nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium) fertilizer around your irises. A good 10-10-10 general garden fertilizer with other trace elements and minerals such as iron, calcium, magnesium, sulfur, boron, manganese, copper, zinc also is helpful for the overall health of the irises. Nitrogen promotes

good overall growth and green fans. Phosphorus and potassium help in the development of a strong root system, resist disease and produce abundant bloom.

**Pest control:** Thrips and aphids lay their eggs at the base of the fans and with the warmer weather they are beginning to become active. You can direct spray Malathion on the infestation of insects. Soap and water will also reduce but not eliminate the insect problem.



**Watering:** With the weather becoming warmer we need to watch our watering for the bloom season. Begin watering deeply to promote root growth. We have had a dry winter and spring does not look much better. With the onset of warmer weather watering will need to be more frequent to produce good bloom, about once a week. If the ground begins to look dry check three inches below the ground to see how moist the ground is if it is dry water with a deep soaking.

Happy Gardening,

Dennis

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

April 5: Bridget Bernardi  
April 7: Sherry Brown  
April 12: Barbara McCurry  
April 15: Robin Walter  
April 19: Cynthe Brush  
April 22: Dennis Luebkin  
April 30: Jean Pembroke



May 4: Bob Knill  
May 14: Marion McConnell  
May 15: Johanna Van Klombenburg  
May 16: Jody Bartling  
May 24: Vicki Hughes  
May 29: Yvonne Morlan  
May 30: Tony Griffin

June 1: Diana Chapman  
June 3: Sherry Williams  
June 13: Janet Chabolla      Janice Warren  
June 17: Gary Miller      Michelle Snyder  
June 23: Elise Beatty  
June 23: Joella Cheek  
Mar 13: Elise Beatty      Barbara Kyte  
June 26: Tom Ziffer

## Thank You Letters

### **Yavapai College Foundation**

### **Thank You Donors**

Enclosed is a personal thank you letter from each student who received a scholarship from your fund for this academic year. As you read it, I hope that you will hear their gratitude. They are walking the path of higher education with the understanding that someone believes in them - and that makes all the difference.

Scholarships change lives. For some students of Yavapai College with financial need the journey through higher education can be challenging, but because of your generosity these students never feel like they are in it alone. Because of you, our students have the ability to dream, to reach, to study and pursue on education - and because of you, they are succeeding.

There are hundreds of students and families whose lives have been changed because of generous donors such as you. In this coming academic year the Foundation will distribute over \$750 000 in scholarship funds to students. -That is an impact that will be felt across Yavapai County for generations to come.

Thank you so very much for supporting the outstanding students of Yavapai College.

Sincerely, Foundation Staff

To whom it may concern;

January 5, 2022

Thank you for the scholarship. I intend to use the funds for a semester fuel budget as well as a purchase of a Ipad to be used for class work. I am studying agriculture this semester and intend to complete the certification program and carry that work over to a field of botany /or principles in the field such as plant biology -my interest in this field is formulated from a homeopathic angle as I enjoy searching for the good in all supposed bad things ex; the cause is the cure idea. I am intending to be employed in one of the many landscaping area business at the end of my 2nd semester as a place to learn full time hands on and then continue with my studies and ultimately open my own nursery in my local community where i hope to be able to hold classes for the teaching of water conservation as well as hydrating and storing food and growing fresh herbs fruit and veggies.

Thank you, Doralee Castillo

**SAVE THE DATE - 29 APRIL 2022**

**BLOOMER-RANG IRIS FARM TOUR – Luncheon/Potluck**



**TIME:** Due to the recent hike in gas prices, we would like to utilize carpooling to the extent possible. As such, a meeting place will be determined, and all will meet there at 10am. If you are able to carpool and take riders, please note same on the R.S.V.P. sheet at the April 23 meeting (1:30pm) or in your email to me (jericonklin@yahoo.com) to reserve your space for this exciting tour, first of the season! If you plan to arrive on your own, meeting time at Bloomer-Rang is 10:30am.

**PLACE:** Bloomer-Rang Iris Farm, 9424 Steven Trail, Wilhoit, AZ (928-273-1844) (maps to follow)

**R.S.V.P.:** It is important that you R.S.V.P. at the April 23rd meeting, or via email to myself so we have a relatively accurate number of those coming. The club will provide sub sandwiches (meat/vegetarian), picnic utensils and paper wares, bottled water, etc. As to the “potluck” aspect, we are asking those of you planning to attend, to please bring a side dish as per your last name alphabet below.

A - H: Salads - fruit, potato, macaroni, pasta, green

I - P: Desserts

Q - Z: Chips and/or beverages other than water.

\*\*If you desire to bring something other than that suggested for your last name, please feel free bring something else .

**AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE:**

We are in luck as there will be some potted iris available for sale at the tour. Orders for later in the year when digging commences may be taken as well.

13th Annual Photo Contest,  
June 18th, 2022

It's photo time! Well, it's three months earlier than in previous years, but as past September meetings have been very busy with the photo contest, silent auction, ice cream social and a guest speaker, it was suggested and voted on by the committee that we have 'photos and ice cream' in June! So, get those cameras - in whatever form they take - clicking!

Only PAIS members are eligible to enter. Photos can be taken anywhere, anytime but must be taken by the entrant. **Entrants will need to have their 8" x 10" photos printed.** You can enter up to three photos, in each of four categories, which are...

*Category A:* Habitat – Iris landscape or iris scene

*Category B:* Individual iris – single or cluster of same iris

*Category C:* Artistic – Macro and/or photoshopped enhancement of iris

*Category D:* Irises & Others – irises with insects, animals, people...any or all, your choice

Entrants, please come to the 'Contest Registration' table to submit your photo(s), to which you have added on the back, your name, and the category you are entering it in. Soft pencil or a sticky note will do, just so it's legible.



No photographer's name will be on display as it is a 'popular choice' contest. Everyone who comes to the meeting will be given a voting slip and choose their favorite in each category. After voting is finished, there will be a tallying by our very own 'mathematicians' and winners and runners up in all categories will be announced, and prizes will be awarded. We will have \$40 gift vouchers from Mortimers Nursery for 1<sup>st</sup> place winners & various prizes for runners up.

www Robin www

P.S. Have your photos printed at a reasonable price at CVS , Walmart, or Walgreens.

## The American Iris Society

...is generously offering **one FREE year of membership** - valued at \$30 - to any **NEW** members joining the Prescott Area Iris Society between March 1st, 2022 and May 31st, 2022. This offer is only open to new members. So, encourage your iris friends to join us.

## DISHING THE DIRT BRYCE WILLIAMSON

AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY BLOG MONDAY, JANUARY 18, 2021

No, The World of Iris blog has not joined *The National Enquire* in dishing iris dirt on people, but rather this post is about real dirt and the problems iris growers face when growing irises in the same garden for many years.

I first planted irises in this yard in 1977 and the bloom the next year was amazing and just what I would have expected from soil that had never had irises grown there; however, as the years went by, the quality of growth and bloom declined and this seems to be a common story among iris growers.

Looking back, many of us have tried different things to get good growth and bloom. Some were more successful than others; other methods no longer are allowed by environmental regulations. I know of no one that really understands why modern bearded irises deplete the soil.

The most obvious thing is to fertilize more—Region 14 hybridizer Vern Wood wrote in an article for *The Bulletin of Region 14* that he applied fertilizer heavily so that it looked like a light snowfall.

In the good old days, it was possible to fumigate soils and this seemed to reset the soil for a period of time.

Large growers like Schreiner's rotate their fields, but that is not really possible in home gardens. I have tried letting areas of the yard go fallow, but that does not seem to really work.

I have even shifted the main planting of named irises to the front yard and that helps for a time seem to really work.

Bringing in new soil helps too, but again it only helps for a time.

Over the last 8 years, I have been on a different program.

Once the area to be used is cleared, we apply 15-15-15. Some will question the numbers of the fertilizer, but that was what irises growers in this valley were using when I first joined the iris society and I have not had a reason to change. Once the fertilizer is down, I water heavily and I want moisture down 4 or more inches into the soil.

Then I buy chicken compost. It is more expensive than steer compost, but steer compost can contain unwanted seeds. The chicken compost may be a bit hot upon arrival, but that quickly is resolved over a few days or a week. That chicken compost is moved into the area to be renovated and covered to a depth of 3-4 inches. The amount of compost is determined by the area to be covered. In the good old days, if I bought enough compost, the delivery charge was waived, but that perk has done the way of the dodo... Ah, the good old days.

Then we bring in the largest rototiller we can get into the yard; when I moved here, I could have a tractor and tiller brought in and that was wonderful because it would cut deeper into the soil, but these days the infilling of what was once a semi-rural area has sadly removed that option. The area is then ready to be tilled.

I insist that the area tilled must be cut in at least two directions. All of these preparations I like to have done between the end of bloom season and the start of shipping season when my purchases start to arrive. The plants grow well, bloom freely, and there is the added bonus of the soil being very friable. Although it is early November as I write this and I am having problems figuring out how to come up with images. I will dig a rhizome or two in the morning so that you can see the quality of plant this process produces.



**Reader comment:** Not only are organics important, but replenishment of micronutrients are important too. Bearded iris are heavy users of magnesium, selenium, and boron. Normally those micros are present in barely adequate amounts in most soils at a neutral to slightly alkaline ph. Iris clumps can rapidly deplete the soil's store of those nutrients locally, and they'll need to be replaced. I use Azomite for micros with my fertilizer program as well as a combination slow/fast release nitrogen formula in my all purpose fertilizer mix. Then its double dug to at least 12" A ridiculous amount of work but then I've been able to use the same bed(s) for growing iris 10 years .