



# Lynda Miller, Iris Hybridizer Extraordinaire

'Football Hero' Dykes Medal Winner 2022

Mid-America Iris Garden photo, used with permission

Photo of Lynda Miller in her garden was taken by Bryce Williamson, used with his permission.



REPORT by Barbara Walls

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**R**enowned iris hybridizer **Lynda Miller** flew from Oregon to speak at the Sun Country Iris Society's February 4th meeting.

**Sun Country Iris Society** (SCIS) had graciously invited anyone wanting to hear her lecture, making guests feel welcome. Laura & Mark Reinhold, Gary Miller, Isabel Olsen, Cynthe Brush, and Barbara Walls from PAIS, all attended the meeting at the Valley Garden Center in Phoenix.

Lynda's work is universally recognized. She has won many prestigious awards, including the 2022 Dykes Medal for TB Football Hero and the American Society's Hybridizer award, acknowledging hybridizers who have engendered new introductions of exceptional merit. In 2016, she was recognized with the Bennett C. Jones Award

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# PRESIDENT SHERRY'S MESSAGE

**S**pring has sprung! While winter was very dry, we were lucky to receive some recent snow & rain, but, we're still a bit short. We can already see spring with our flowering trees and early year blooms. I hope everyone was able to get their irises fertilized and have been giving them a drink, more often, now as temperatures are starting to warm up.

PAIS is still looking for donations to replace iris cultivars lost last year at the Yavapai College Sculpture Garden. We have about 36 donations so far & we are hoping for additional ones from you, our members, and via publicity through the AIS Region 15 newsletter & the HIPS Roots magazine, which is doing an article in their spring issue. The list was sent out with our last newsletter. Copies will be available at our April 19th board & general meeting.

Our annual Spring Iris Show will be May 10th. We'll be asking for volunteer sign-ups at the April 19th meeting to help Friday set up and, of course, helping at the event on Saturday. Keep an eye on your iris blooms for exhibit entries. Maybe this year you will enter the design exhibit, too!

PAIS needs volunteers for the Sharlot Hall Garden team to monitor and help take care of several iris beds we have planted there. (More info below) If you haven't visited Sharlot Hall recently, drop by. We have historic irises in locations around the museum gardens that were popular during the years of Sharlot Hall's life (1870 – 1943).

Hope to see everyone on the 19th!

~ Sherry Williams  
PAIS President



## HISTORIC IRIS LOVERS ~ PAIS NEEDS YOU!

**S**harlot Hall Museum in Prescott hosts several special historic iris beds including a collection of irises hybridized by Grace Sturtevant, the first woman iris hybridizer. Sturtevant developed her irises from 1910 to 1937. The collection of Sturtevant irises is planted next to the Fremont House on the SHM campus.

Other historic iris beds planted by PAIS members over the years are located by the Amphitheater, beside and in front of the Schoolhouse, and by Fort Misery. All these irises would have been grown in gardens during the years of Sharlot Hall's life (1870 - 1943).

PAIS needs a member willing to work with Josh Nomland, SHM's groundskeeper, and to coordinate a team of PAIS volunteers to do seasonal iris upkeep: grooming, weeding, twice yearly spring fertilizing, as well as digging iris clumps (when needed) to use for the annual PAIS rhizome sale or to plant elsewhere on the SHM campus. Signage for cultivar clumps needs to be kept in good repair and placed properly. It's an honor to care for these lovely, living antiques for SHM visitors who may not be familiar with historic irises and to enthruse younger generations about how irises have developed over the years. Please contact Cynthe Brush: [cynthe.Brush@gmail.com](mailto:cynthe.Brush@gmail.com) if you would enjoy caring for our historic irises. You don't have to be an expert, we can teach you!





# CALENDAR & ANNOUNCEMENTS



## 2025 PAIS Calendar of Events

Unless otherwise noted, all events will be on Saturdays and held at:

**Stoneridge Community Center ~ 1300 Stoneridge Drive, Prescott Valley AZ 86314**

The Board of Directors meets at 11am in the Stoneridge Community Center kitchen on the day of the general club meeting next to the room where we hold our regular PAIS meetings from 1:30pm-3:30pm. **Remember!** All members are invited to join us at board meetings. Your comments are always welcome.

Speakers and Guest Speakers will be updated as they are confirmed.

Public Garden Maintenance projects will be scheduled on an as needed basis.

**February 15** ~ General Club Meeting: "Is Your Iris Bed Ready for Spring?" - Lisa Fahey, owner of Bloomer-Rang Iris Farm

**April 19th** ~ General Club Meeting: "Preparing for the Iris Show" - Isabel Olsen | "Photo Contest Tips" - Cynthe Brush

PAIS members "Share your Favorite Snacks" sweet & savory refreshments potluck followed by a tour of the Yavapai College Sculpture Garden Iris Beds

**May 9th** (Friday) ~ Spring Show & Sale Set-Up, 4pm-7pm

**May 10th** ~ Spring Show & Sale: Final Set-Up, 7:30am-9:30am. Public Entry 10am-2pm. Clean-Up 2pm-4pm

**June 21st** ~ General Club Meeting - Photo Contest - Ice Cream Social

**July 19th** ~ Rhizome Marking Party

**July 25th** (Friday) ~ Rhizome Sale Set-Up 11am-4pm

**July 26th** ~ Final Set-Up 9:30am. Public Entry 10am-2pm. Clean-Up 2pm-4pm

**August 9th** ~ Rhizome Potting Party of unsold rhizomes for our 2026 Spring Sale

**September 20th** ~ General Club Meeting. Iris Silent Auction Fundraiser.

**November 15th** ~ General Club Meeting. 2026 PAIS Board Election.

All updates and announcements will be emailed (and included in the newsletter when possible). So be sure not to miss out on all PAIS happenings by keeping your email address up-to-date.

SDB 'Dark Vader' won Cook-Douglas Medal in 1993, MTB 'Moose Tracks' was awarded the Williamson-White Medal in 2021, SDB 'Just Shocking' is a 2024 introduction. Photos Courtesy of Mike Unser & Lynda Miller  
Used with permission



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS & BIRTHDAYS

## CONTACT US

**President:** Sherry Williams [duckwalkdesigns@gmail.com](mailto:duckwalkdesigns@gmail.com)

**Vice President:** Isabel Olsen [isabelolsen.nmgc@gmail.com](mailto:isabelolsen.nmgc@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Kellie Smith [mrsautowizard29@gmail.com](mailto:mrsautowizard29@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Eugene Zielinski [eez55@earthlink.net](mailto:eez55@earthlink.net)

**Past President:** Marty Boxer [martin.boxer@asu.edu](mailto:martin.boxer@asu.edu)

**Director-at-Large:** Kathy Sisley [kathy.sisley@gmail.com](mailto:kathy.sisley@gmail.com)

**Membership:** Robin Walter [redstickrob@gmail.com](mailto:redstickrob@gmail.com)

**Publicity:** Sandra Schilling [SSchilli9151@gmail.com](mailto:sschilli9151@gmail.com)

**Newsletter:** Cynthe Brush [cynthe.brush@gmail.com](mailto:cynthe.brush@gmail.com)

**Hospitality:** Ida Montgomery & Paula Garat

**Membership Database:** Bill Walter  
[tasmania.bill@gmail.com](mailto:tasmania.bill@gmail.com)

**PAIS Facebook:** Barbara McCurry  
[bj4mccurry@hotmail.com](mailto:bj4mccurry@hotmail.com)

**Historic Iris Society Liaison:** Cynthe Brush

**YC Sculpture Garden:** Marty Boxer & Kellie Smith

**Embry Riddle Hotshot Memorial:** Kellie Smith

**Sharlot Hall Museum Historic Irises:** TBA

**Prescott Area Iris Society (PAIS):**

PO Box 11918 Prescott, AZ 86304

BEST WISHES TO OUR MEMBERS  
WITH MARCH & APRIL BIRTHDAYS!!!

### MARCH



Cheryl Dreska ... Mar 1  
Marilyn Campbell ... Mar 5  
Stan Book ... Mar 9  
Loretta Bresof ... Mar 11  
Marty Boxer ... Mar 12  
Charles Steen ... Mar 13  
Victoria Van Klompenburg ... Mar 13  
Johanna Van Klompenburg ... Mar 15  
Joyce Knill ... Mar 21  
Judy Book ... Mar 27  
Luretta Lyall ... Mar 31

### APRIL



Sarah Lisa-Petrauschke ... Apr 4  
Bridget Bernardi ... Apr 5  
Thelma Fromm ... Apr 9  
Amy Hirschert ... Apr 12  
Robin Walter ... Apr 15  
Cynthe Brush ... Apr 19  
Dennis Luebkin ... Apr 22



# LYNDA MILLER, HYBRIDIZER

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Left to right: Lynda Miller, Sharon Rovey Petterson, Barbara Walls (back to camera) | Photo courtesy of Luis Verger (SCIS)

for Outstanding Median Hybridizing for her many contributions in the field. (Read more: [http://www.medianiris.com/mis\\_bio\\_lyndamiller.html](http://www.medianiris.com/mis_bio_lyndamiller.html)) Lynda's introductions are available for purchase at Mid-America.

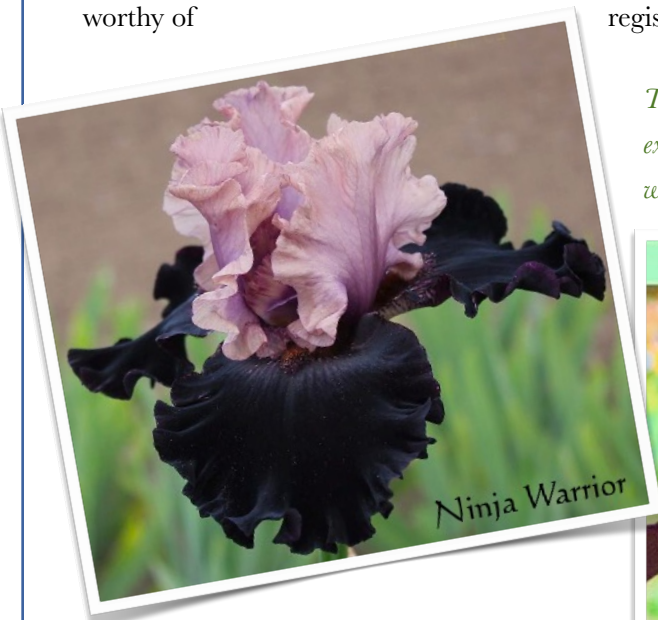
She and her husband Nathan left Indiana for the incredible soil of Oregon. She described her soil as so soft and rich that even her year one seedlings will bloom — an amazing feat! It was difficult for those of us who work in the hard Arizona soil to imagine soil being so soft that she lost one of her shoes in the field when her leg sunk deep into the earth. She still hasn't found that shoe!!

Lynda discussed ideal qualities of a garden-worthy iris, such as heights for tall irises versus medians, desired blooming period and bud count, the type of branching, and how to assess haft marks and color.

The presentation also served as a judge's training with a quiz afterwards. We were both entertained and enlightened.

As a hybridizer, she emphasized the need to cull irises that don't meet all criteria for excellence. For instance, even if an iris is strikingly beautiful, it needs to be tossed (or used for breeding) if it only produces four blooms. She stressed the need for irises to be endowed in all areas of excellence — branching, foliage, form, longevity, and color -- to be worthy of registration.

*TB 'Ninja Warrior' (2016) is a strikingly different Lynda Miller hybrid. She's excited about seedling 319B, a NW cross Another luscious seedling she showed us was 6418B from TB 'Fruit Slices' along with many more.*



Photos of Lynda's slides are courtesy of: Luis Verger (SCIS). 'Ninja Warrior' photo used with permission of Mid-America Gardens



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# PAIS SPRING IRIS SHOW

## KALEIDOSCOPE OF COLOR 2025

### Prescott's Festival of Iris

**Saturday, May 10**

**10:00 AM to 2:00 PM**

**Stoneridge Community Center**

**1300 Stoneridge Drive, Prescott Valley, AZ**



- View iris blooms and floral arrangements
- Vote for your favorite iris
- Watch an iris planting demonstration
- Memberships available
- Purchase potted iris



Proceeds support Yavapai College scholarships and local food banks.

Visit our website <http://prescottirissociety.org/>

Follow us





# IRISES: PURPLE COLORATION TYPES

**W**hat is PBF? What is PCT? Although literally translating to *purple-based foliage*, the acronym *PBF* has come to be used as a general reference for the occurrence of purple colorations in parts of the iris other than the blooms...such as the rhizome, bracts or spathe.

A new term coined to refer to all types of purple colorations, excluding the bloom, is *purple coloration types* (PCT). We hope people find the term useful and adopt usage.

The purple colors of PCT come from the accumulation of pigments found within a group called anthocyanins. Pigments in this group occur in the blooms as well, helping produce purples, blues and reds. Different factors, both genetic and environmental, determine if and how much pigment accumulates. When PCT do occur they seem to be at their peak during spring and early summer. Further into summer they may fade out completely or become unnoticeable.

Here's where you may notice various PCT on your irises:

- **Purple-based foliage (PBF)** – Purple in the basal area of the leaves. Generally most visible in the spring. May possibly fade in summer, perhaps becoming invisible.
- **Purple rhizome (PR)** – Purple on the top of the rhizome. PR being only two letters, it helps to use the full descriptive term in your observation notes and perhaps all the time in speaking. May fade during the summer.
- **Purple-ringed rhizome (PRR)** adjoins the base of the fan. The rhizome has a purple ring all the way around it. This is most common in SDBs. May fade in summer.
- **Purple spathes / bracts / sheaths / bud valves** – These terms are used somewhat interchangeably.
- **Purple stalk / stem / branches / pedicels** – No good acronyms.
- **Purple leaf edge / margin / wire edge** – A band of purple along the leaf margin, typically very narrow. No good acronyms.



PBF Displayed on  
Iris leaf fan bases



PCT Displayed on  
Iris bud sheaths &  
wire edges of spathe

## WHY SHOULD IRIS GARDENERS BOTHER OBSERVING PCT?

**Display of PCT is useful for verification and identification of iris cultivars.** BUT there are caveats. Display can be variable within the same cultivar / species and even within the same clump. Time of year, soil chemistry, weather and other factors can influence display. It's possible a PCT-capable iris may at times display no PCT at all. Also,

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# IRISES: PURPLE COLORATION TRAIT

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the observed iris might be incorrectly identified. PCT is a useful tool, but it must be considered along with other pieces of the identification puzzle. With the help of iris growers, the **Historic Iris Preservation Society** (HIPS) will compile multiple observations for each iris and see if any pattern variables are suggested.

## REASONS FOR THE HIPS PBF SURVEY

The occurrence of PBF is underrepresented in iris descriptions and in general iris literature. One goal of the annual HIPS Survey is to help correct this underrepresentation. Based on data to date, we estimate approximately 20% of irises are capable of displaying PBF. Within the 8,000+ cultivars and species reported to the HIPS Member Databank there are likely to be many hundreds of irises capable of PBF, but have not been reported to a central list. **YOU may be the key person** to get an unrecognized PBF capable iris on the books. The Survey is open to ALL. You do not need to be a HIPS member.

## ANNUAL CUMULATIVE COUNTS REPORT

Survey results are updated annually. There are some cultivars / species being reported with mixed PBF-yes / PBF-no observations. This can be expected since occurrence of PBF is a variable trait. It reinforces the desire for multiple reports on each iris to help suggest its degree of variability.

Becoming aware of mixed yes/no behavior requires people to report PBF-no observations as well as PBF-yes. So, HIPS is very appreciative of reporters who include PBF-no observations.

## SOME SURVEY RULES HAVE CHANGED!

Historic irises are targeted, but irises of any age are accepted. HIPS very much encourages PBF/PCT observations be made when the iris clump is in spring bloom, which is anytime from bud emergence until end of bloom. (This helps verify the clump is what you think it is.) However, alternate out-of-spring-bloom observations are now accepted, including early spring and summer observations. Please withhold late fall and winter observations. **The main counts and data analysis are made using in-spring-bloom data only. We will assume an observation is made when clump is in-spring-bloom unless you advise us otherwise so please advise when needed!!!** Out-of-spring-bloom data will be noted in a separate column in the Cumulative Report and given no special count or analysis.



MDB Iris 'Elf Esteem'  
Old leaves showing PBF  
on their bases.



MDB Iris 'Elf Esteem'  
Displaying PRR-Purple Ring on Rhizome  
which spreads slightly to the leaf base

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# IRISES: PURPLE COLORATION TRAIT

*Article continued from page 8*

## ANNUAL PBF SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

Submit your report by January 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. (ie: If your report is for 2025 observations, the deadline is January 31, 2026. If submitted later, the report data would be made part of the 2027 Cumulative Report.)

## SURVEY FORM DOWNLOADS

The form is available in several formats on the [PCT Project webpage](#). All are set up to print as letter-sized portrait. For questions or if you have any trouble downloading or opening the file, please contact the Survey Coordinator: [PBFsurvey@historiciris.org](mailto:PBFsurvey@historiciris.org)

## SURVEY RESULTS

3,613 iris specimens have been reported over a period of five years. The average number of irises reported per year is 723. In 2024, there were 492 irises reported, much fewer than normal...which is why HIPS is reaching out to a wider group of iris gardeners to encourage their participation.

2,357 different irises have been reported. 1,625 of those names were PBF-Yes irises, which puts HIPS well ahead of any other PBF list out there. Join in and let HIPS know which of your irises display PBF / PCT. We are eager to hear from more iris gardeners! Thank you.

SOURCE: Article adapted from the HIPS [PCT Project webpage](#)



## SCIS: LYNDA MILLER

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*Isabel Olsen and Dale Liggett behind Isabel, ready to enjoy delicious treats assembled by Luis & Julie, SCIS' refreshments team.*



*Gary Miller (right), belongs to both SCIS & PAIS. He's with Armon Cheatham and Jackie Peel in front of the fellows.*



*Part of the PAIS gang had a chance to meet Lynda Miller before her presentation. Left to right: Gary Miller, Isabel Olsen, Lynda Miller, and Cynthe Brush*

## IRIS GARDEN TIPS

Several iris bed amendments & fertilizers / tips / critter repellents were discussed at the February PAIS meeting. In case you weren't able to be there, here's a short reference list.

**Amendments:** Mushroom compost - Happy Frog Soil conditioners (Yellow bag)

**Fertilizer Options:** Milorganite (high nitrogen - 1T / plant - 2x year) ~ pelleted conventional fertilizers 10-10-10 applied in early February followed by 6-24-24 in mid-March ~ Organic Espoma Bulb or Rose Food (per instructions on the bag) ~ Fish Emulsion, diluted per instructions, applied every 2 weeks beginning in February through bloom season.

**Critter Repellents:** Garlic oil, diluted 5T/24oz water sprayed around iris beds (not directly on the plants) and at the edge of your garden seems to keep pesky animals from nibbling ~ Wilco Gopher Repellent contains zinc and is actually a rodenticide. Use per instructions, realizing it also carries a slight danger of secondary poisoning to foraging wildlife. ~ Cinnamon essential oil (6 drops/per oz of water) makes an effective spray for aphids and does not hurt plants. However, if ants are 'farming' the aphids, you will have to use it more often...and don't spray ladybugs!