



Growing New Irises from Seed



Cross #21-28-CK

Seedling #4
Maiden Bloom

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There's a growing curiosity and interest among our PAIS members about how to grow new irises from seed. Several members have been bringing seed packets from their own or others hybridizing crosses (often bee pods), for us to try our hands at.

Always curious, I have been germinating and growing some of these iris seeds since the autumn of 2022. Fifty-nine iris seedlings are now growing in my garden, including a very old cross from 2016! Nine irises from a particularly vigorous 2021 cross had their maiden bloom last May. I'm eagerly anticipating their second bloom along with 20 more from five other crosses this next bloom season. And just this month, ten seeds from 2022, 2023, and 2024 crosses have germinated and already been planted into cups of soil.

STARTING INSIDE with a Step-by-Step Method:

1st Step: SOAK the seeds for 4-10 days, changing the water daily to help remove the natural germination inhibitor.

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PRESIDENT SHERRY'S MESSAGE

Well...this has been a VERY dry winter so far! Hopefully, the skies will open up a bit more before spring to provide us with a bounty of iris bloom that we all look forward to.

PAIS hired Jonny's Tree Service & Landscaping to completely renovate Yavapai College Sculpture Garden with a more resilient irrigation system, a \$6000 project that was greatly needed. Much of the irrigation system had been installed when the gardens were first planted and have been repaired by our members annually. Last year's lack of rain caused wildlife to come to the gardens looking for water, digging under the rhizomes for grubs and other food. The result was a loss of approximately 65 cultivars and destruction of much of the irrigation system.

Cynthe Brush has 10 cultivars that are possible replacements for those we lost (if they have good increases this year). We are asking our PAIS members and other Region 15 iris societies to see if they have any of the other lost cultivars that can be donated.

The list of lost iris will be included as an attachment to this newsletter. Please check your garden inventory to see if you possibly have replacements you can donate. We have budgeted funds for this year to purchase some of the replacements, but we are always limited by how well the Spring & Rhizomes sales do – budgeting is planning, our sales are the action that allows us to follow through with our plans.

Some great meetings are planned for this year, starting with February. Unfortunately, due to some bad scheduling on my part, I will miss the first meeting this year, but Isabel will step in and, as always, do an amazing job leading you in the first meeting for 2025.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the April meeting and at the Spring Show.

~ Sherry Williams

PAIS President



MEMBERSHIP LIST ~ INFO OPTIONS

We want to give all of our members access to the PAIS membership list. It's important for us to be able to contact each other for many reasons: volunteering, planning & organizing events, and, of course, social gatherings.

We have heard members, in the past, express concern about putting their information 'out there'. We are planning on putting a password protected, members only, membership list on the PAIS website. Only members will be provided with the password. However, we want your input on what information is put up for members to see. If you are fine with your name, address, phone, and email address to be included, you do not need to respond.

If you want to limit the information included you will need to email Sherry Williams at duckwalkdesigns@gmail.com to indicate which information you wish to be published:

Name ~ Address ~ Phone # ~ Email Address



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.

Photos Courtesy of Superstition & Bluebird Haven Iris Gardens & a friend, used with permission



BOARD OF DIRECTORS & BIRTHDAYS

CONTACT US

President: Sherry Williams duckwalkdesigns@gmail.com

Vice President: Isabel Olson isabelolson.nmgc@gmail.com

Secretary: Kellie Smith mrsautowizard29@gmail.com

Treasurer: Eugene Zielinski eez55@earthlink.net

Past President: Marty Boxer martin.boxer@asu.edu

Director-at-Large: Kathy Sisley kathy.sisley@gmail.com

Membership: Robin Walter redstickrob@gmail.com

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

Newsletter: Cynthe Brush cynthe.brush@gmail.com

Hospitality: Ida Montgomery & Paula Garat

Membership Database: Bill Walter
tasmania.bill@gmail.com

PAIS Facebook: Barbara McCurry
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 JANUARY & FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS!!!

JANUARY



Susan Taylor ... Jan 6
Pat Ownings ... Jan 9
Kathleen Shaffer ... Jan 11
Barbara Walls ... Jan 15
Barbara McCurry ... Jan 19
Angela Denis ... Jan 24
Peggy Ahola ... Jan 31

FEBRUARY



Candis Peters ... Feb 1
Catherine Van Klompenburg ... Feb 3
Constance Van Klompenburg ... Feb 11
Pat Barlow ... Feb 13
Bill Walter ... Feb 17
Diane Thornbrugh ... Feb 23
Betty Lou Barnes ... Feb 28



GROWING NEW IRISES

Article continued from page 1

2nd Step: After that's done, put the seeds in a damp paper towel in a ziplock baggie in the refrigerator for 12 weeks to 120 days for the required chilling period.

3rd Step: Check the seeds weekly or monthly during this chilling (stratification) period to look for teeny white dots or tendrils which are the tips of the root.

NOTE: I'm doing monthly checks now. The weekly checks were too time consuming.

4th Step: Once a root tip shows, you may transfer that seed(s) to a small transparent, lidded container to encourage the first leaf sprout. I put them under a grow light, just as you would with vegetable seeds.

4th Step OPTIONAL: Each seed may be planted in a small 3" pot, 8-12 seeds per pot. Mark where you have planted them with a toothpick tucked at the edge of the pot. All seeds should be from the same cross and label the pot with the cross info.

5th Step: Once the iris seeds have completed their 12 weeks to 120 day chill period, you may plant them all with or without roots OR you can dry out the seeds that didn't germinate roots to try again next fall, which is what I do.

6th Step: Continue growing the seedlings inside under grow lights until the springtime weather warms up and danger of freezing is past.

7th Step: In April, take the seedlings outdoors to acclimatize to light, wind, temperature variations. Put them in the shade for at least a week before exposing them to sunlight.

8th Step: Continue growing the seedlings in their small pots until September, when each seedling should be transplanted into the garden or as a group into a large planter to grow on. Plant them at least 6 inches apart. The following year, they may need to be planted 12 inches apart. Be sure to label each seedling clearly with the cross as well as their individual number in order of sprouting sequence.

STARTING OUTSIDE with a Step-by-Step Method:

1st Step: About two months after pollination, the seed pod, which should be encased in a small mesh bag with ties, will turn brown and split open. Harvest the golden brown seeds in a small paper cup.

2nd Step: Keep the cup in a cool, dry place. Allow the seeds to dry out for a couple more months. Be sure to keep a record of the parents with the seed.

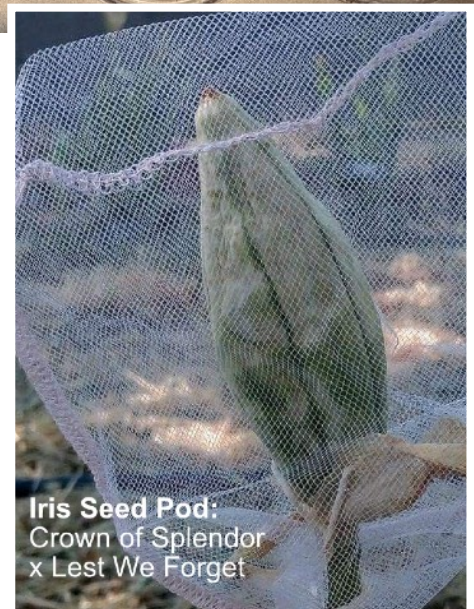
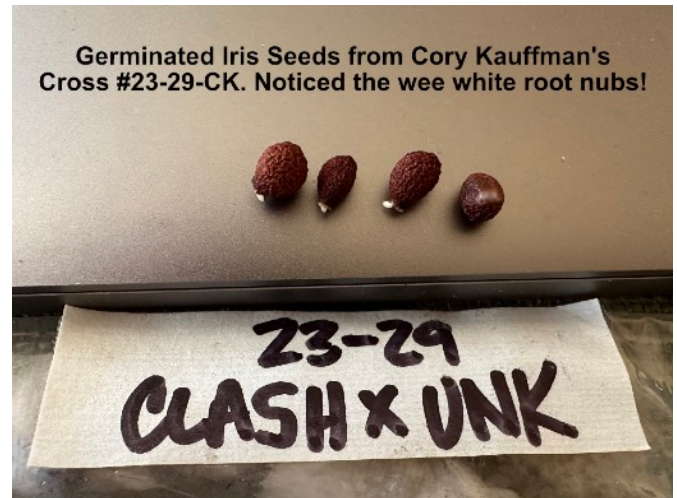


Photo: Gary Miller

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PAIS MEMBERS IRIS FARMS

PAIS is fortunate to count three iris farms among our membership: **Amethyst Creek Farm** in Chino Valley and in Middleton, Idaho, **Bloomer-Rang Iris Farm** in Wilhoit, **Elk Path Iris Farm** in Pine.

We encourage our iris enthusiast members to consider their offerings for your 2025 iris gardens. Let's support our own communities and businesses ~ **Shop Local and Buy HomeGrown!**



I'd like to present – **Amethyst Creek Farm** – We will be having our soft opening this season – with about 100 varieties for sale. We have more than 2500 varieties of bearded irises – featuring over 250 rebloomers, more than 600 historic, and nearly 200 Guardian Gardens varieties, as well as new introductions. We look forward to our next 3 years as they should be epic on the farm. The farm is in Middleton, Idaho – about 10 miles from Sutton's Irises. I am co-located between Idaho and Arizona and have more than 700 varieties here. Don't have any terrific photos of irises blooming yet as we are just getting going. Although, my family has been growing and loving irises for at least 4 generations. We welcome you to come have a look at our iris listings. ~ [Dr. Laura Reinhold](mailto:Laura@AmethystCreekFarm.com)
www.AmethystCreekFarm.com 208.616.3588 Laura@AmethystCreekFarm.com

We are excited to announce we are expanding. We added over 800 new varieties this past season! Our new beds look amazing and we can't wait to see our upcoming bloom season! Opening day TBD. Watch the website & our new Facebook page - **Bloomer Rang**



Family Farm for all updates. ~ Lisa Fahey
www.bloomerrangirisfarm.com 330-958-0319
bloomerrangirisfarm@gmail.com



TB Adriatic Noble



Elk Path Irises located in the mountains of Pine Arizona, is a hobby farm featuring a special, registered Historic Iris Preservation Society garden as well as beds with more modern cultivars. Open to the public two weekends in May. We have over a thousand different varieties of irises.

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PAIS MEMBERS IRIS FARMS

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For dates and times and for sales information during the summer, follow **Elk Path Irises** on Facebook. Visitation dates depend on the timing of the peak bloom season, which is usually mid May.

The mountain towns of Pine and Strawberry are truly wonderful to visit in springtime. We really do have elk paths--so wear sensible shoes!

Contact us at elkpathirises@gmail.com.

PAIS MEMBERS' SPRING DREAMS & PLANS FOR THEIR 2025 GARDENS

A few members shared their responses to our February email Survey. The questions were:

- 1) What new irises are you planning to buy for your gardens this year?
- 2) What new iris blooms are you looking forward to seeing in your garden?
- 3) Do you have other plans for your iris gardens in 2025?

Bill Walter ~ I don't really have any plans yet for my pumpkin patch -- I'm just waiting to see how much I can salvage from last year. They're lookin' rather pitiful so far.

Marge Larson ~ Last years bloom season was sparse, so I'm looking forward to seeing all of my old friends flourish this spring. I also hope to NOT have any new gopher mounds!

Kellie Smith ~ I am super excited to get outside and make some iris beds. I have been moving for the past couple of years and my irises have been held hostage in pots. Due to the drought and extreme heat this past year, I lost quite a few. My goal for 2025 will simply be to replace some of my favorite iris. I gravitate towards broken patterns and space age. Until it's time to play in the dirt, I'll continue making a list.

Gary Miller ~ Not much to write. Just anxious to see some of my seedlings bloom for the first time. May buy some new iris at SCIS auction.

Barbara Walls ~ 1) From Suttons I bought the introductions *Angels on My Shoulder*, *Full of Life*, *Maroon Bells Glow*, and *Runner Girl*; all these are just gorgeous! I bought *Olive Windows* from Constant Gardener because the cultivar is said to bloom very very early (two modifiers!), so I want to see what happens with it. Will it compete with *Crimson King* in terms of earliest bloom?



Sutton's Iris Garden photo, used with permission

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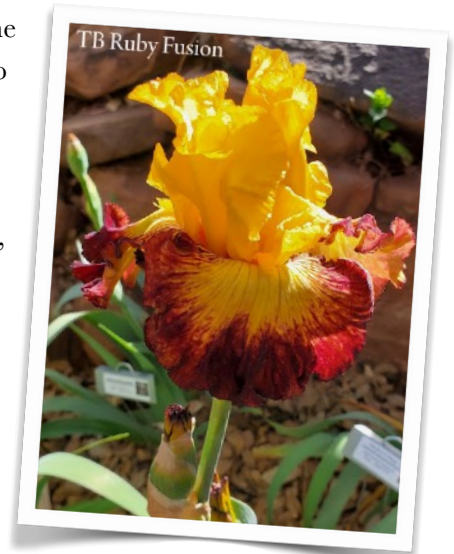
SPRING DREAMS

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I also bought *Ridgecrest* because I used to live in Ridgecrest, California, so the name is sentimental. I'm adding *Argent* and *Gene Wild* to my historical collection, but I'm also waiting to see what historic irises Eagle Ridge and Black Ridge Irises offer that I can add to expand the area.

~ 2) I'm looking forward to my favorite Ruby Fusion thrilling me again. Last summer I planted *Coloring Book*, *Out of Character*, and *Garden Appeal*, and *Gilded Chocolate*, so I am interested in seeing how they perform. I also purchased about fifty historical irises to add to my specialty garden. I really want to see whether my additions flourish and how the area is filling out.

~ 3) I am augmenting early bloomers in my garden, so most of my purchases are for very early to early-mid bloomers. In 2024 I had blooms from April 24 through June 23. I tend to miss many of the June blooms because of vacation, hence the refocusing. I have purchased a few raised bed structures that were on sale so I can experiment with them. I'm also going to begin an epic battle with the vinca minor to expand some beds down the hillside. I've won earlier battles, but this one will be ridiculously arduous.



Mid-America Iris Garden photo, used with permission



Sutton's Iris Garden photos, used with permission

Cynthe Brush ~ 1) I'm on an iris austerity program. LOL! Need to thin my excess before buying more...though I ALWAYS buy / trade for more irises despite myself.

~ 2) There are definitely irises I'm hoping will bloom this year: *Blueberry Tart*, *Bottle Rocket*, *Grapenuts*, *Helen Collingwood*, *Lady Friend*, *Praetorian Guard*, *Rosy Celebration*, *Sindjkah*, *White Noise*, plus an extravaganza of maiden bloom from the iris seedlings!

~ 3) Need a new bed for the potted irises I've had for a few years. And have my drip irrigation system redone to water everything more appropriately. The system was malfunctioning most of last year, which hampered a good bloom season.



Superstition Iris Garden photo, used with permission

GROWING NEW IRISES

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3rd Step: In late October, plant the seed about 3/4 inch deep and 1 inch apart in well drained soil and full sun. Again, label your plantings clearly so that you can identify the sprouts next spring. The planted seed should spend the winter outdoors.

4th Step: The following spring little irises will grow from the seed you planted. Replant and space out the "baby" iris when they become crowded. Label each new planting clearly. Grow your newly developed irises to maturity, which will take a couple of years, and enjoy the blooms!

TIPS: Signs that your seedlings 'may' bloom the next spring:

~ Wavy leaves

~ Tiny offsets growing on the sides from the base of the main fan. If they are not attached to the fan, then they are likely sibling seeds that have taken longer to sprout.

Learn to Evaluate Your Seedlings for Garden Worthiness & Uniqueness

The American Iris Society Judges Manual is helpful (but overwhelming!). I also have gathered tips from more experienced amateur hybridizers, which I can share in another article, if there's enough interest.

Be forewarned! It's very easy to 'fall in love' with your iris babies. Only one in ten seedlings may be worthy. Grow them for another year or two, while you observe its hardiness and vigor, learning what traits and habits make for a good garden plant. Each class of irises has different standards for height, number of buds, etc.

If you develop an exceptional beauty with a strong growth habit, you might consider registering it with the American Iris Society. (You will need the information on the parentage, if you have it, in order to register the new iris.) The AIS is open to all who grow and love iris, professionals and amateurs alike.



Happy Wee Iris Seeds
The sprouted seeds grown in transparent lidded containers seem to be flourishing after planting in these cups.



Iris seedling bed of Cross #21-28-CK replanted April 2024 after a gopher invaded, fatally damaging a seedling.



Summer 2024: Cross #25-16-CK
Seedlings were transplanted 9-5-2023