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### Topic: The World of Iris -- It's Bigger Than You Think

Subtitle: A brief look at the many kinds of irises, most of which will grow well around here. They range in size from a few inches to over six feet in height, and fit in a wide variety of garden situations.

Brief bio by Speaker, Gerry Snyder:

I grew up with irises, and start growing them myself in the late 1970's shortly after buying my first house. But I didn't get the iris virus until saw my first iris show in 1989. I joined the San Fernando Valley Iris Society on the spot, and the AIS as soon as I found out it existed. Within a couple years I was editing the monthly newsletter, and then was demoted to president.

I was Regional Vice President of Region 15 (Arizona and Southern California) for two years. At the national level, I have been Affiliates Chair, served two three-year terms on the Board of Directors, and am currently Symposium Chair, in charge of the annual vote for the 100 favorite Tall Bearded Irises.

Our garden in Southern California had about 120 different iris cultivars, almost all Tall Bearded. We plan to start an iris garden in Sedona this year, but with fewer cultivars selected from a wider range of species.



Drawing by Rita Gormley

### **Do I dig the bulbs up every year?**

The rhizomes usually only need to be dug and separated about every 3 years. Once a rhizome has bloomed that rhizome never blooms again, but it will have shoots off the side that grow. That's why it appears to be blooming every spring, but really it's the new growth that blooms.

### **What time of year?**

It's best to divide in Aug or Sept for this area, but it can be done just after bloom. **What can I trim when the blooming stops?** As to cutting the fans, it is advisable not to. But the stalk should be cut back to the top of the rhizome after it has finished blooming. Of course any dead matter etc. should be removed at any time, if present.

### **Is there a publication you would recommend for the amateur who just wants the iris to bloom nicely?**

We have several books in our libraries. I found these at the Yavapai College:  
**Iris, A Gardener's Encyclopedia**, by Claire Austin and,  
**\*The Gardener's Guide to Growing Irises** by Geoff Stebbings.

Plus many web sites. Just "Google" Tall Bearded Iris.

Drawing by Rita Gormley



### **How and when to water ?**

Watering when temperatures are over 90 degrees promotes root rot. I water in the summer at night when it is cooler and I use soaker hoses where possible rather than spray.

### **How deep do I plant a rhizome & how far apart?**

The very top of rhizome should not be covered, only the roots in the ground, about 2 feet apart.

### **Are there limits of planting different cultivars near one another to prevent cross breeding?**

If you snap off spent bloom, like I do, then they can not cross pollinate because they will not make seed. Conditions for seeds to germinate are very complicated. We rarely have the ideal conditions here, even if they do make seed.



Hope this has helped answer some of the questions you may have. Please feel free to send any questions to editor. If I don't know the answer, I'll try to find one.

By Linda Smith: irisgrower@cableone.net



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hello to everyone,

It seems quite a few people have gotten the *"IRIS VIRUS"*, if membership is an indicator. At the time I'm writing this, we have 33 paid members, with quite a few more inquires. I believe we are off to a great season, not only with number of members, but with the nice weather and moisture, both of which are great assets.

I have some questions for you. I'm wondering how many of you have digital camera and do you know how to send your pictures to me? I am planning the August meeting to be about *YOUR* pictures. I'll put the photos on slides in power point, and each person can share about their own gardens. I plan to visit as many gardens this spring as I can, and I will also take photographs. So please inform me of when you will be available. If you do not have digital, please let me know, and I will scan your hardcopy pictures.

Here's to a Great Growing Season.

Come Grow with VAIS.



*Linda Smith*

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### MINUTES OF MEETING OF VERDE VALLEY IRIS SOCIETY HELD AT COTTONWOOD PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING, 6<sup>TH</sup> STREET, ON JANUARY 30, 2008 AT 5:30 P.M.

**Present:** Linda Smith, President and members and visitors as follows.

Members & visitors who had signed in totaled 38. Latecomers brought the total of all attending to approximately 60. This number included interested parties from Camp Verde, Clarkdale, Cornville, Cottonwood, Sedona, Gilbert and Prescott.

The President opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Members and visitors introduced themselves.

**Minutes:**

The minutes of the meeting of October 24, 2007 had been included in the newsletter sent out on January 6, 2008. Gerry Snyder made a motion to accept the minutes, Michelle Snyder seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report**

Linda Smith reported that the Association has \$175 in the bank account that PAIS is holding until VAIS has set up its own bank account. Linda informed the meeting that Judy Reinhardt had resigned from the position of Treasurer due to her work schedule.

**Old Business**

Discussions of VAIS Bylaws and member tour were delayed until after the program speaker had concluded her presentation.

**New Business:**

Stan Book from PAIS addressed the meeting with various topics relating to judging, conventions, and upcoming events. Stan informed us that Rick Tasco of Superstition Gardens would be a speaker at the Region 15 Trek on 10-11 Oct 2008.

Vera Stewart announced that Bob Van Lierer of IRIS4U Gardens, Co., would be speaking on hybridizing at the February 16<sup>th</sup> PAIS meeting to be held at Yavapai College in Prescott, and invited VAIS members to attend.

At this time, since many members were not able to stay for the business meeting, the speaker presented her program.

**Program:**

Candy Peters presented a interesting and informative program on historical irises.

After the presentation, those who could not stay for the Old Business portion of the business meeting, departed.

**Old Business (continued):**

The President then presented the draft of the Bylaws for Verde Valley Area Iris Society. Following a short discussion, Cookie Best made a motion to accept the Bylaws as written; the motion was seconded by Gerry Snyder, and passed unanimously. The

Bylaws will be finalized and then signed and dated by the President and Secretary of VAIS. At that time a copy will be used when opening a checking account for VAIS.

The President has investigated the best possible options for our banking requirements, and advised the meeting that Chase Bank, Cottonwood, is the best option. Michelle Snyder made a motion to open the checking account at Chase. This was seconded by Gerry Snyder and passed unanimously. When the account is opened, PAIS will return the funds they are holding for VAIS.

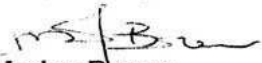
Gerry Snyder volunteered to be our speaker for the March meeting, which will be March 26 at the Cottonwood Public Safety Building on 6<sup>th</sup> Street, at 5:30 p.m.

The President suggested we start a VAIS members garden tour. Some discussion ensued and this idea will be further pursued.

The President stated that VAIS still does not have a full charter of officers. In addition she stated that each officer is also required to be a member of AIS. After discussion regarding whether one person may hold two positions, Gerry Snyder advised the meeting that in his experience, this was acceptable. The President suggested that she be President and Treasurer until the Treasurer position can be filled; Merlyn Brown will hold the positions of Vice President and Secretary until the Vice President position can be filed.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 7:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted

  
Merlyn Brown  
Secretary

Secretary Minutes submitted by  
Diana Smith edited by Merlyn Brown