

September, 2009

Next meeting Friday, 18, 2009
 Doors open 7:00 P.M.
 Meeting 7:30 P.M.
 Place Native Sons Hall
 239 High Street, Santa Cruz

2009 Calendar

Monthly meetings are held in Native Sons Hall unless otherwise stated.

Regular Meeting
 Friday, September 18 7:30 P.M.
Tall Beardless
Refreshments
 Volunteers Needed

Regular Meeting
 Friday, October 16 7:30 P.M.
PCIs
Refreshments
 Volunteers Needed

Regular Meeting
 Friday, November 20 7:30 P.M.
Program TBA
Refreshments
 Volunteers Needed

Annual Holiday Dinner
 Green Valley Grill
 Friday December 18 6:00 p.m

We still need volunteers for Fall refreshments. Sign up at the meeting or contact Tom and he will sign you up!

Newsletter

Deadline for October is October 2nd. Please have all submissions in by the deadline. Getting material in on time will insure a newsletter out on time. With my work and school schedule, I need material in on time.

Joe's Annual Sale

Inside—more details. Don't miss it!



Japanese Iris Crystal Halo

From The Prez

MANY THANKS TO CARL BORO of the Clara B. Rees Iris Society for his digital slide presentation of the 2009 National AIS Conference in Kansas. The images were excellent, the irises were magnificent and Carl's preparation of the presentation—including careful and clear labeling of the irises—was quite impressive.

The scenes of irisarians enjoying several gardens made us viewers wish we had been at the Conference, right up to Big Downpour. Carl described the extraordinary deluge they experienced one evening, and then showed images of irises that had been pelted by raindrops. We have yet another reason to appreciate our Mediterranean climate!

Our regular meeting on September 18th will initiate our annual election process, during which we will select board members to replace those who have termed out, fill any vacancies on the board and appoint officers. The first step of this process, in September, is the appointment of a Nominating Committee. Then, in October, the Nominating Committee will present its slate to the members; in November, the members will vote for officers and directors; and in December the newly elected officers and directors will assume their offices.

Please make yourself available to serve the Society as an officer or board member. Your participation will both help our group to continue to flourish and grow and



provide you with an interesting and rewarding experience. Joining in can be particularly valuable for those who have not previously taken a leadership role in a community group because they can share fresh perspectives as well as new energy.

Our program for our September meeting will feature Tall Beardless Irises. I'll announce details of the in a IRIS Alert prior to the meeting. Mark your calendar! I'll see you at the meeting on Friday, September 18th. ❀❀ Tom

CULTURE TIPS

FROM MID-SEPTEMBER to about mid-October we experience some of our hottest weather. In sandy soils be sure you irises and all plants get enough water. Pacificas can be left alone and wait for the winter rains, but if you want to replant them, you want to start them growing. Begin watering them about mid-September and they should have adequate new roots need for replanting in 3 to 4 weeks.

This is the month to finish up bearded replanting and replant all types of beardless (except for Pacificas--wait until mid-October for them). In contrast to bearded, beardless irises really can't stand being out of the soil for any length of time. If you aren't replanting them immediately, hold them over in a bucket of water until you're ready to plant them.

Spuria irises are easy to grow around here and put on a good show in the spring. At one time they definitely bloomed after the tall bearded, but through the years they can bloom just about anytime in the spring (global warming?)

Louisianas are another type that have begun blooming earlier and earlier through the years that they are pretty much in full bloom with the tall bearded. Be prepared for a lot of leaves for the amount of bloom you get from Louisianas around here. ❀❀ Joe

Carmel Mission Iris

We know the Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Rio Carmelo simply as the Carmel Mission. The buildings and grounds of the mission are very popular with visitors and greatly valued by residents of the Monterey Bay area, and a group of the mission's local friends has been working to improve the gardens of the mission.

Last year, one of the community organizers, Peggy Flynn, bought several iris rhizomes at the MBIS's sale at the Aptos Farmer's Market and planted them at the mission. She recently asked the Society to advise her and her volunteer helpers on lifting and replanting the rhizomes.

Her request presented a good occasion for the Society to share expertise with gardeners in our regional community, help to establish a very prominent display of our favorite plant and potentially encourage many people to appreciate the iris and grow it in their own gardens.

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With such thoughts in mind, we promptly responded to Peggy's request. We sent the MBIS's paper, *How to Grow Tall Bearded Iris* to her, and Charley Kearns emailed responses to her specific questions. Then, MBIS Member Anne McCann, who lives near the Mission, offered to meet with Peggy Flynn and her volunteers to guide their work on Friday, September 11th.

We have not yet heard how the work session went, but the accompanying snapshot, taken the following day, certainly suggests that the group accomplished their objectives for the day. The full story will be told next spring!

The Carmel Mission's iris planting project is an exemplary opportunity for our society to pursue our primary purpose, to "promote the culture and improvement of the genus *Iris*" in several ways, including "education of the public through ... display gardens..."

Many thanks to Charley Kearns, Anne McCann and Peggy Flynn and the Carmel Mission volunteers for helping the MBIS to pursue its purpose.

Beardless Iris

Siberians and the Pacific Coast Natives can tolerate light shade but the Spurias, Japanese and Louisianas demand full sun. Louisianas and Japanese require moist conditions during the summer months while the Pacific Coast Natives enjoy a very low humidity and dry soil no matter how hot it may get. All, except Louisianas, should be planted in a permanent spot where they can remain for many years as they resent being disturbed. Louisianas tend to “creep” and therefore, should be tended to every few years. All are heavy feeders and need to be fertilized regularly.

Some spuria are difficult to establish. Basically spuria need water, manure, and mulch to become established. Begin the planting by making sure the soil will allow for good drainage and is enriched. Then make a hole about two inches below the surface. Add fertilizer (14-14-14 is suggested) to this hole. Then put lots of water into this hole. Finally add the rhizome, cover with soil and mulch. Watering this new spuria rhizome from the top of the soil is not sufficient for establishing a clump. Mulch spuria the first year of growth. Saw dust is the best mulch to use. After the clump is established, the mulch may be removed during the blooming season.

Japanese Iris should be planted 2 to 3 inches deep in a depression which will help catch water. Then fill the depression with organic mulch such as peat moss. After planting or division it is essential to not let the JI dry out. Planting the iris in a depression is important because new JI roots grow in above the old roots.

Japanese Irises prefer a rich soil with ample organic matter, which helps in water retention as well as adding nutrients. The soil pH should be slightly acidic, ideally between 5.0 and 6.5. NEVER ADD LIME, as this will raise the pH and eventually kill the plants.

Japanese Irises are heavy feeders. A liberal application of a balanced fertilizer (10/10/10) in the spring and just before bloom is beneficial. Weak plants will be invigorated with a biweekly foliar and drench application of a water soluble acid fertilizer such as Miracid. The preparation of your iris bed with composted manure and peat will be a good start for your JI, but once planted do not fertilize transplants until they have become established. (The same is true for Siberian Irises)

Japanese iris need to be divided every three to four years when the new roots will be coming out right at the soil level. A clump that has formed a solid ring with a bare center needs to be divided. After the plants have been divided, trim the leaves to a height of four to six inches. Replant the divisions in a depression and it is essential to keep the new divisions wet.

At the time of division, the iris should be moved to a new location where Japanese iris have not grown before. Japanese iris in Japan are commonly grown in pots and it is easier to

Annual Iris Sale(s)

We had multiple August rhizome sales this year. August 1st at Deer Park, and August 8th at the Aptos Farmer’s Market. Deer Park sales were \$2,728. The Farmer’s Market, August 8th were 1,290. Total for 2009 is 4,018; 2008, \$3,282; 2007 Deer Park sales were \$3,143. Thanks to all that worked the 2 sales. Many members worked both—and, a special thank you to Fred Valentine for chairing the August sales.

We also have \$874, up from last year’s \$729, in income from the Smart Garden Faire. This year’s picnic brought us \$716, when last year’s income was \$836.

That makes the total income for this year \$5,608.



Refreshments

We need a volunteer to provide refreshments for Friday’s meeting. Karen was scheduled to organize the refreshments, but she is caring for her mother, who is ill, and will not be able to attend our meeting this month. If anyone can short term sub for her that would be wonderful and give her one less thing to think about.

The club will arrange to have the plates, napkins, etc. at the meeting, so we need a volunteer to provide the actual munchies!

Please email or call Tom if you can fill this need!

Nominating Committee

This is the month we start the process of getting our set of officers for 2010.

The President appoints the chair and two additional members are voted on from the floor. The Committee will report at the October meeting. Further nominations may be made from the floor and the election is held at the November meeting. The new officers are installed in December.





Door Prizes

Through the years a wide range of beardless have been given away by the Club. It is more than time to dig and replant them (or at least thin them out). Bring the surplus to share as door prizes. Also any last bearded are welcome for sharing as door prizes.



Bloomers

Bring your rebloomer to share! First drawing goes to those who have brought blooms. Rebloomer drawing starts in August and goes until February.



Third Annual Ghio One Hour Surplus Iris Sale

Saturday, September 18, 9 to 10 am, 1201 Bay Street, Santa Cruz. A selection of some of the best and newest from hybridizers such as Schreiner, Ghio, Keppel, Blyth and others. All are \$5.00 each—a limited number of 2009 intros are \$10 each. Limited number; early birds will have the widest selection. the past two sales we re complete sell outs well before the hour was up! Also a selection of organic veggies will be available as an added plus.



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