



No. 36

News from the Greater New Orleans Iris Society

January 2021

Think Spring!

But while you wait for bloom season, take advantage of a wealth of online iris information and pictures.

The principal source of information on Louisiana irises comes from the Society for Louisiana Irises, founded in 1941. GNOIS members automatically belong to SLI, and a copy of its major publication, the magazine *Fleur de Lis* is available to download quarterly. See below.

The *Fleur* is regarded as one of the best iris publications around. The current issue contains includes



www.LouisianaIrisGNOIS.com/Fleur-de-Lis/

When you join GNOIS, you automatically become a member in the **Society for Louisiana Irises** with access to an electronic version of quarterly magazine *Fleur de Lis*. The current issue is now available to download.

COPING IN COVID TIMES

The pandemic has disrupted GNOIS activities but it can't stop bloom season. Plan to get out and see the irises in a couple of months.

We may not be able to hold our traditional meetings at the East Bank Library, but COVID-19 has not shut us down entirely. We are blessed to have our iris planting in City Park, where we can assemble safely outdoors. We had one General Membership Meeting before the present virus spike, and the current issue of *Fleur de Lis* has an account of it, including lots of pictures.

We have also had volunteer days and individual efforts to help maintain the iris plantings and work on our Propagation Initiative. The Propagation Initiative is also covered in the current *Fleur* and the previous issue of *Bayou and Marsh* in June.

The Island Iris Nursery looks good now, but we need more volunteer help. That will be especially important when the weather warms up. The nursery is large, so it is possible for volunteers to easily social distance. We require masks at all gatherings, of course.

Our sale in October at Longue Vue was very successful. Usually the fall sale consists only of bare root

rhizomes, but since we had to cancel the potted iris sale in the spring, we had many of those plants to offer to the public. Altogether, we made around \$5,000 to help fund our activities.



A January bloom in Metairie. More to come.

We did have irises left and donated many potted and bare root rhizomes to Pelican Greenhouse to sell for the benefit of the New Orleans Botanical Garden. We have donated plants to Pelican Greenhouse in the past and plan to continue to provide irises to support the Botanical Garden on an ongoing basis. Our iris holdings are large enough now that natural increase will assure a flow of plants for this and many good causes.

articles on:

- Some of Michael Reed's favorite Louisiana irises
- A review of favorite red irises by Ron Killingsworth

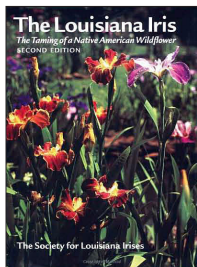
Killingsworth

- The progress of hybridizer Brian Shamblin in developing blue Louisianas
- A follow-up article on Louisiana irises with a pendant form; a pictorial review of the last GNOIS meeting on the island in City Park; and an overview of the GNOIS Propagation Initiative, by Patrick O'Connor
- A memorial by Ron Betzer to Dorman Haymon, a prominent Louisiana iris hybridizer, including a feature article on the irises Dormon developed.
- A memorial by Robert Treadway to Walter Moores, a significant hybridizer of bearded irises, who also worked with Louisianas.
- The regular column of "Briarwood Reflections" by Curator Rick Johnson, writing from the Caroline Dormon Nature Preserve in North Louisiana.

And -- as always -- lots of iris pictures.



SLI also has a website (www.Louisianas.org) and a history of excellent publications on Louisiana Irises. Many of its "Special Publications" are now out of print, but it's excellent book *The Louisiana Iris: Taming Of An American Wildflower* is still available. Look at the last page of this newsletter for the publications offered in the SLI Storefront.



Don't forget the GNOIS website while you are browsing for iris information. We are the new kid on the block but will soon be twenty years old. There is a lot to explore on our site, including the Louisiana Iris Species Preservation Project. If you visit the Island Iris Nursery in the spring, you will see this effort's accomplishments on display. www.LouisianaIrisGNOIS.com

Back Issues

Back issues of the Bayou and Marsh are online. If you missed one or are a new member, you might want to take a look. There are interesting articles and lots of pictures.

<http://www.LouisianaIrisGNOIS.com/Newsletter/>

GNOIS 2021 Schedule

Because of the pandemic, all GNOIS activities will be outdoors until further notice. For most, we will meet at our iris planting in City Park.

Thursday, April 1, 5-7 PM	Louisiana Iris Day at Longue Vue
September 18	General Membership Meeting, Island Iris Nursery
October 23	Rhizome Sale at Longue Vue, time TBA
November 13	General Membership Meeting

All meetings on Saturday, 9 AM, unless otherwise indicated

Directions to the Island Iris Nursery are on the GNOIS website at:

<http://www.LouisianaIrisGNOIS.com/IslandDirections.pdf>



Iris nelsonii growing at the Island Iris Nursery.



An old yellow iris on the island, donated by Briarwood, probably an early Caroline Dormon hybrid.

We're Buying New Irises!

It's "In With The New" but the old will stick around, too.

Our club boasts an extensive collection of Louisiana iris cultivars in our City Park planting. They range from significant historic irises to recent introductions. As each year passes, however, new plants from different hybridizers come to market, and many of those are not represented in our collection. To remain up-to-date, we need to add new plants.

President Sue Anthony has appointed a committee to develop a list of irises introduced in the past two years by several of the largest Louisiana iris nurseries: Cindy's Louisiana Iris in Carriere, MS, Iris City Gardens in Nashville, TN, and LLS Plants in Baton Rouge. We expect to make a substantial purchase for fall delivery. Members can expect to see the new bloom the following spring in an increasingly diverse display at the Island Iris Nursery.

The pictures below are just a few on our list. You can check the online offerings of these growers:

Cindy Dufrene <https://www.cindyslouisianairis.com/>

Greg McCullough <https://www.iriscitygardens.com/>

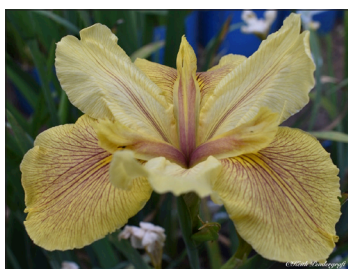
Scott Lively <https://llsplants.com/>



'Lake Jindabyne' (Peter Jackson, 2021)



'Chimes Street' (Scott Lively, 2020)



'Aftermath', Keith Pendergraft, 2021)



'Optical Illusion', Robert Treadway, 2020)



'Rings of Romeo' (Ron Betzer, 2021)



'Neverending Rant' (Scott Lively, 2020)

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hope everyone is doing well. I'm so excited about this year's bloom. I've had more time to work in my garden and can't wait for that burst of color to appear.

Now is the time for us to fertilize our irises. A feeding is recommended about six to eight weeks before the anticipated emergence of the flowering stalks, and there should be early bloom by mid-March.



Susan Anthony

Remember that watering is as essential in the winter as it is in the summer. Ample moisture will allow the plants to endure any long, dry cold snap, which might otherwise set them back.

The easiest way to keep soil evenly moist all the way up to the surface is to mulch. Mulching also regulates the fluctuations in the soil temperature and greatly enhances water conservation.

The Island Iris Nursery looks fantastic. We are going to have an amazing bloom there. The propagation of *Iris giganticaerulea* by our members this summer was very successful. We have hundreds of new rhizomes to use in future projects. We also have early germination of *Iris fulva* seeds provided by Paul Pastorek, but significant additional germination is expected next year.

Due to the current surge of COVID-19 virus, the Board has decided it is in the best interest of our members to cancel the scheduled January 23, 2021 meeting. We are planning several safe activities during the coming bloom season, however. Look for information in this issue, with more to follow.

We hope to see everyone in April.

GNOIS On The Web

www.LouisianalrisGNOIS.com

www.facebook.com/Greater-NewOrleansIrisSociety

It's that time of the year.

GNOIS membership runs on a calendar year basis, so January is the month to renew. It's a deal! Only ten dollars for an individual or family. Or, twenty-five dollars for three years.

And there's more!

Through a special arrangement with the **Society for Louisiana Irises**, your dues includes an "electronic" membership in SLI. That entitles you to download a pdf version of the quarterly magazine **Fleur de Lis**, an excellent color journal regarded as one of the country's top iris publications. SLI, formed in 1941, is the principal organization dedicated to Louisiana irises.

Just complete this form and mail it in.



Greater New Orleans Iris Society

GNOIS

PLEASE JOIN OR RENEW!

Dues: \$10 per person or household for one year, or \$25 for three years. Please make checks payable to Greater New Orleans Iris Society, or GNOIS. Please provide the names of those in the household who will participate and, if desired, email addresses for each.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

(Please provide email address to receive this newsletter and other information.)

Mail to: GNOIS, P. O. Box 872051, New Orleans, LA 70187-2051



Society for Louisiana Irises membership, including an electronic subscription to the SLI journal **Fleur de Lis**, is included when you join GNOIS.

What do my irises need now?

Late Winter Tasks

The bloom season is not far ahead, and we are beyond most of the harder, hotter work of maintaining a garden. Summer and Fall work is just a pleasant memory, although the hotter part may be debatable. Right now, it sounds pretty good.

There are generally only a couple of tasks to attend to at this time of the year.

One, you should clean out and dispose of any yellowed foliage. It's normal for some foliage to turn yellow from time to time, and it is best to get it out of the garden. At this time of the year, that is just for appearances sake, but after bloom season, it is especially important to prevent any rust disease from spreading. If foliage harbors rust and is allowed to decompose in the garden, the spores will go into the soil and return the next year. Removing yellowed foliage can break the rust cycle. It is a good garden habit.

Two, and most importantly, you should fertilize now. It is recommended that Louisiana irises be fertilized at least twice a year, once in the Fall (September or October) and again in late winter. Some also fertilize after the bloom season ends.

The late winter feeding is important because good nutrition should be available to the plants when rapid growth begins in mid-to-late February.

Almost everyone asks which fertilizer is best to use. It is important not to agonize over this to the point of inaction. Virtually any fertilizer is far

better than not fertilizing at all. Other than inadequate moisture, failure to supply fertilizer is the leading reason that people get poor bloom in their Louisiana iris planting.

The traditional recommendation was a balanced fertilizer such as 8-8-8 or 13-13-13. This means equal proportions of N-P-K, or nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Some prefer a lower nitrogen proportion (the first number) now, because nitrogen encourages foliage growth at a time of the year when bloom is more important. They recommend more phosphorous (the middle number) to encourage bloom.

It would be a mistake not to fertilize because the perfect mix was not at hand. The irises will respond to whatever you feed them, but they will object to abstinence.

Organic fertilizers are an excellent idea but are mostly not quick-acting. They require a long term strategy to be effective and are not the best choice for a quick boost.

Check out the following for more information:

General Louisiana iris culture:

www.LouisianaIrisGNOIS.com/IrisCulture/

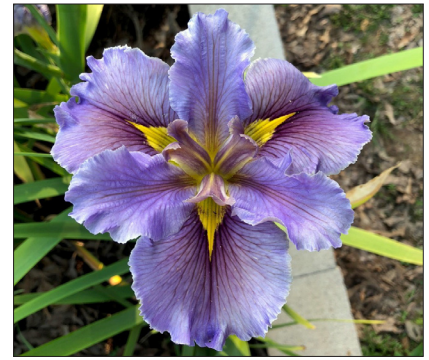
Read the interview with the pro and the article on fertilizers for Louisiana irises by Robert Treadway).

Also, on growing from seeds:

www.zydecoirises.com/Culture/Propagation.htm

Questions?

There are bound to be questions. You may want to know more about iris culture, about a garden or other place where irises can be seen, or about iris activities in the area. Direct any questions to the editor, Patrick O'Connor, pfoconnor@cox.net. And check out the GNOIS website or Facebook page for bulletins.



Robert Treadway's 'Violet Vision', another planned 2021 acquisition.

Bayou and Marsh

NEWSLETTER OF THE
GREATER NEW ORLEANS IRIS SOCIETY

OFFICERS

Susan Anthony, President

220 Jefferson Heights Avenue

Jefferson, LA 70121

504-733-3089 Anthony_Sue@ATT.net

Paul Pastorek, Vice President

9816 Debra Drive

River Ridge, LA 70123

beaureese24@gmail.com

Calvin Lopes, Treasurer

P. O. Box 872051

New Orleans 70187-2051

TaxManLA@bellsouth.net

Lorrie Brown, Corresponding Secretary

6509 Schouest St. Metairie, LA 70003

504-442-1790

lorrie.brown4@gmail.com

Carolyn Drouant, Recording Secretary

5142 Bordeaux Drive Kenner, LA 70065

504-615-0269 daqueen504@icloud.com

BOARD

Tyrone Foreman New Orleans

Benny Trahan Slidell

Paul Pastorek River Ridge

Cynthia Maldonado New Orleans

Sally LeBourgeois Metairie

Linda Hennessy Metairie

Patrick O'Connor Metairie

Mark Schexnayder Metairie

Benjamin Clement Kenner

Catherine Mason Abita Springs

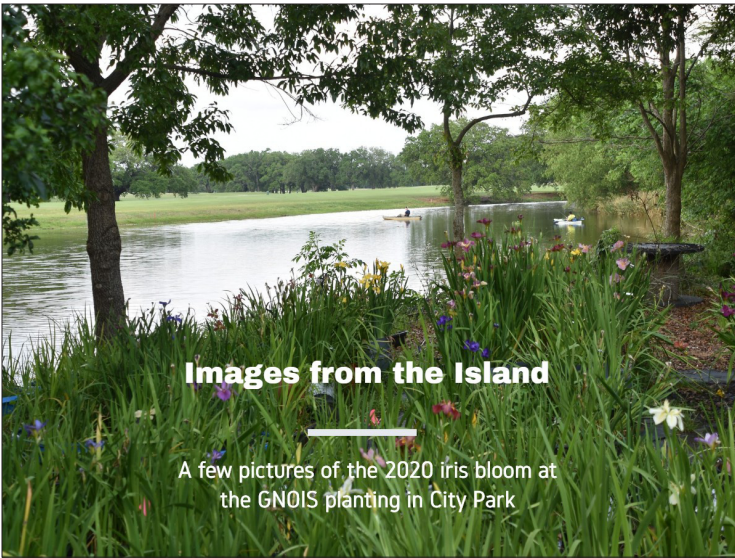
Joe Musacchia Gray (past president)

NEWSLETTER

Patrick O'Connor

4628 Newlands St. Metairie, LA 70808

504-343-1399 pfoconnor@cox.net



From upper right: Louis Armstrong, Grand Coteau, Hector Duhon, Gulf Moon Glow, Creole Canary, and Holden's Hit.

Left: unidentified (picture by Richard Drouant), Brazos Gold, and Queen Jeanne.



Get me to the irises!

Spring is not far off, and the irises are calling. Bloom season lasts about a month, generally from mid-March to mid-to-late April, and with a peak of a couple of weeks in the middle. It varies from place to place, of course.

If you want to get out and see the irises in bloom, how should you use your precious time? Some suggestions.

- **The Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden.** You'll see cultivars in the old section and species in the new. Remember, they charge a small admission fee now.
- **Preserves and Natural Areas.** Species irises, mainly the tall *I. giganteaerulea*, abound in natural areas, along boardwalks and other accessible locations. High on the list would be the *Wetland Trace in the Town of Jean Lafitte* and the *Northlake Nature Center* in Mandeville.

- **Farther Out.** If you are inclined to drive farther, consider *Palmetto Island State Park* outside Abbeville, the *Black Swamp in the Burden Museum and Gardens* in Baton Rouge, or - for a huge treat but long drive - *Briarwood, the Caroline Dormon Nature Preserve*, Saline, in North Louisiana.

There other places closer in. For a longer list with directions and pictures, check the GNOIS website. Or click:

www.louisianairisgnois.com/Where_the_Irises_Are/

You can also wander the roadsides in South Louisiana. The wild irises are still out there, even if not nearly as plentiful as in days past.

Your one best opportunity to see the largest number and widest variety of irises is the GNOIS Open House at our Island Iris Nursery in City Park on April 3. Watch for details on our website, on Facebook, and in your email.

Commercial Directory

Aitken's Salmon Creek Garden

608 NW 119th Street
Vancouver, WA 98685-3802

Phone: (360) 573-4472
aitken@flowerfantasy.net

www.flowerfantasy.net

Featuring Beardless and Bearded Irises

Bois d'Arc Gardens

Rusty McSparrin
1831 Bull Run Road
Schriever, LA 70395

Phone: (985) 446-2329
E-mail: bois@charter.net
Web: www.bois-darc.com

Catalog with color photos online

Wholesale & Retail Prices

Cindy's Louisiana Iris

93 Cassaday Drive
Carriere, MS 39426

Phone: (601) 798-3352
Cell: (601) 799-6780
Email: cindyslairs@gmail.com
www.cindyslouisianairis.com

Hybrid and Native Species
LA irises

Featuring introductions by Joe Musacchia, Patrick O'Connor, Benny Trahan and Roland Guidry

Full color catalog online

Collier's Garden

P.O. Box 32
Lawson, MO 64062-0032

Phone: (816) 580-7116

thomascollier@juno.com

FREE Catalog upon Request

Louisiana Irises, Rebloom Bearded Irises, Daylilies

Iris City Gardens

7675 Younger Creek Road
Primm Springs, TN 38476
Phone: 800-934-4747

email@iriscitygardens.com
www.iriscitygardens.com

Full catalog with color pictures available online.

Catalog text available as a PDF download from the website.

Louisiana Iris Farms

PO Box 82367
Lafayette, LA 70598

Phone: (337) 277-9930
www.louisianairis.com

Wholesale and Retail as per website

Featuring introductions by Kevin Vaughn & Elaine Bourque

Redbud Lane Iris Garden

2282 N. 350th Street
Kansas, IL 61933

Phone: (217) 232-5479
Email: redbud142@gmail.com

Catalog \$1.00

Louisiana and Bearded Irises

Mail order Louisiana iris nurseries generally ship only in the fall. Those listed here should be taking orders now, but may run out of some varieties soon. Most have websites.

The Commercial Directory from SLI shows where to get irises (besides GNOIS sales)

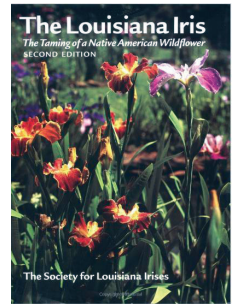
Society for Louisiana Irises Storefront

THE LOUISIANA IRIS: THE TAMING OF AN AMERICAN WILDFLOWER

Contributing Editors: Marie Caillet, J. Farron Campbell, Kevin C. Vaughn, and Dennis Vercher

Details: 254 pp, 111 color photos, 5 watercolors, 21 b/w photos, 14 line drawings, 11 tables, hardcover.

This authoritative treatment by The Society for Louisiana Irises is based on the first edition published by the Society in 1988, but it is considerably expanded. It covers every aspect of the history, botany, and development of these distinctive irises, with particular emphasis on the newest hybrids, hybridizing techniques, and cultural practices, and also includes suggestions for their use in the landscape and in floral arrangements. It should serve to introduce a wider gardening public to these colorful and versatile flowers. - \$30.00



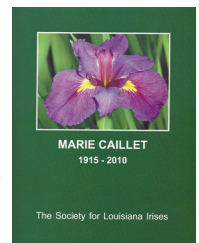
Special Publication of the Society for Louisiana Irises - The History of Hybridizing (2007)

This Special Publication of the Society for Louisiana Irises is a 100-page summary of how the "ditch irises" of Louisiana have been tamed and introduced into American gardens. Contents include informative articles on such early pioneers as Mary Swords DeBallion, Caroline Dormon, and Percy Viosca; the Shreveport and Lake Charles groups, the California hybridizers, and a wide variety of other contributors to the development of the Louisiana iris. Includes 30 color photographs of outstanding cultivars. Paperbound. - \$5.00 plus \$2.00 shipping within U.S.



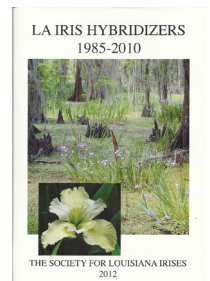
Special Publication of the Society for Louisiana Irises honoring Marie Caillet (1915-2010)

This is a very high quality publication that pays tribute to Marie Caillet, a charter member of SLI, longtime editor of the SLI newsletter, and the "grandmother" of SLI for many of us. This is a 52 page 8.5 x 10 publication in full color with many pictures of Marie, species Louisiana irises, Marie Caillet Cup Winners with pictures, a listing of SLI Distinguished Merit Award winners from 1989 to 2010, and memories of Marie written by several members of SLI. - \$10 plus \$3 shipping within US



Louisiana Iris Hybridizers 1985-2010

This is a paper bound booklet consisting of 99 pages of color pictures, the Marie Caillet Cup Winners from 2001 to 2010 with color pictures, the Mary Swords Deballion Medal winners from 1986 to 2010 with color pictures and many articles written by the hybridizers during the period 1985 to 2010. This is a companion book for the Special Publication of 2007, which contains information on the hybridizers from the beginning to 1984. - \$5 plus \$2 shipping within US

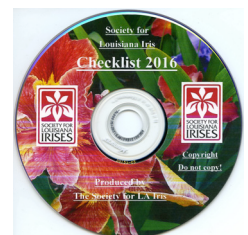


Special Publication of the Society for Louisiana Irises 1995

This paper bound special publication, edited by Marie Caillet and Joseph Mertzweiller, consist of 86 pages and contains "a half-century of progress", information on hybridizers, the development of the tetraploid LA irises, information on LA irises in Australia, culture of LA irises and many beautiful pictures of LA irises. There is a limited supply of this publication remaining so get them while they last. - \$5 plus \$2 shipping within US

The SLI Louisiana Iris Checklist CD!

The CD checklist is illustrated with photos of many of the cultivars and it can be displayed in three formats. It has a powerful search feature that allows you to search the checklist by cultivar attributes such as name, date of introduction, hybridizer, parentage and much more. The checklist lists names, descriptions, breeder/introducer and parentage of iris cultivars from the 1920's through the present. The iris are grouped by year of registration and/or introduction. The CD will cost \$10 for delivery to the United States,



Any of these products & other Iris materials can be ordered from the SLI Treasurer Ron Killingsworth.

For shipment outside US please contact Ron Killingsworth directly for pricing

10329 Caddo Lake Road, Mooringsport, LA 71060 318-996-9969 retmiagt@gmail.com