

February, 2006

Next meeting Friday the 17th
 Doors open 7:00 P.M.
 Meeting 7:30 P.M.
 Place Native Sons Hall
 239 High Street, Santa Cruz

February

This is the most important month of prep for spring bloom. FERTILIZE. Use a balanced fertilizer (10-10-10, triple 12, etc.) A handful (½ cup or so) for each clump. Scratch it in. Usually the soil is wet enough or do it just before a rain, and that's all you need. All types of irises appreciate fertilization but use a much lighter amount for your pacificas.

From The Prez

DEAR MONTEREY BAY IRIS SOCIETY AND FRIENDS,

We have an exciting year ahead!

Thank you to all who have promptly renewed membership in our organization. Many hours of phone calls and paperwork are eliminated when members do their part in following through on the intention to send the check for \$7.00 (or \$10.00 for two at the same address). Our new treasurer is Rosa Raddichi, her address is 730 Modesto, Santa Cruz, 95060-6209. Please mail her a check promptly if you intend to stay a member.

The membership dues cover the cost of making and mailing our newsletters, all other expenses, such as programs, the show, and the holiday dinner are paid for by the club auction in July and the sale at Deer Park Shopping Center in Rio Del Mar, the first Saturday in August. Please let your friends know our sale will be Saturday, August 5.

At our very next meeting, Ann Pike and Tom Karwin will be working together to bring a presentation about our web site and information about irises on the Internet in general. It should be great, and I hope to see everyone there at the Native Sons Hall, 239 High Street, Santa Cruz, at 7:30 on Friday, February 17.

This year, we are planning to have Anna and David Cadd as our guest speakers at our March meeting, March 17. All interested Iris lovers are welcome to attend. At other regional presentations, the AIS has offered judges training credit when the Cadds give the presentation, so we will work on this for our club too.

Our gardens are just beginning to awaken from their winter dormancy, for the brilliant show time of spring is just around the corner!

The National Convention will be in Portland this year. Be sure to mail your registration fees before March 1 for the best deals—share a room with others and make new friends! At our regional, we had about 200 guest irises. They will have 4,200!

❁❁ Diane



Happy Year of the Dog and Spring of the Year!

2006 Calendar

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

Regular Meeting

Friday, January 20 7:30 P.M.

Program

Hot Garden Topic

Refreshments

Shirley Linck and Carolyn Craft

Regular Meeting

Friday, February 17 7:30 P.M.

Program

Our Website and Using the Internet

Refreshments

Mjeanne Erwin and Phillipa Alvis

Regular Meeting

Friday, March 17 7:30 P.M.

Program

David and Anna Cadd Present

Refreshments

Brenda Wood and Diane Harrison

Regular Meeting

Friday, April 21 7:30 P.M.

Program

Mini Show

Refreshments

Rosa Radicchi and Irene Cummins

Annual Iris Show

Capitola Mall..... April 28 to April 30

Set up

Friday 9:00 P.M.

Show

Saturday 9:00 a.m.–8:00 P.M.

Sunday..... 9:00 a.m.–6:00 P.M.

Regular Meeting

Friday, May 19 7:30 P.M.

Pizza Potluck



CULTURE TIPS

WE ARE NOW IN THE SIXTH YEAR of very mild winters. Lot of rain but little cold. In fact this year my volunteer tomatoes haven't even frozen. This means that varieties that are more likely to produce "bald" rhizomes are more likely to do so. A bald increase is one that will bloom but produce no increase regardless of what you do.

This is the most important month iris growing month. The irises have started their spring growth and FERTILIZING is important. Do it! Your irises should be cleaned up of dead and diseased foliage. Dig any weeds at the same time then fertilize. Use any balanced fertilizer like 10-10-10 or triple 12. You can get 50 lbs of triple 12 for less than \$10 at Western Farm Service in Watsonville. Sprinkle handful (about a 1/2 cup) around your clumps, then scratch it in. Just before a light rain is the ideal time to do it, but the soil is cool and wet enough now that watering in is not that critical. If your soil is very light and sandy, then you will have to water it in (if it doesn't rain soon thereafter). At this time of the year, it takes about 4 weeks your fertilization to show its effect.

Also those pesky aphids are probably hiding away deep in the folds of you leaves. If ants are around, you can be fairly sure they are around since the ants farm and milk them. You can squash them when you're cleaning up your beds, but the more certain way of getting them is to spray with a systemic insecticide. When you spray your fruit trees and roses with a dormant spray, do the irises at the same time. It will help some in controlling fungus diseases as the season progresses.

🌱 Joe

Garden Events

San Francisco Garden Show

The Cow Palace
San Francisco, California
March 15-19th
Wednesday to Saturday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Sunday, 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
<http://www.gardenshow.com/sf/>

AIS National Convention

Portland, Oregon
May 22-May 27
Judy Nunn, Registrar
4728 Jade St. N.E.
Salem, OR97305-3138
Nunnjk@comcast.com

Monterey Bay Master Gardeners Smart Gardening Fair

Scotts Valley
June 24 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Greeter surprise!

Let's get a volunteer! Who wants to be early and pass out the name tags?

Board of Directors 2006

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Critter Challenges

Gopher Unlimited owner Thomas Wittman presented a very informative talk about gophers, voles and moles at our January meeting. If you see munched rhizomes and fresh burrowing fans made by the little critters, give him a call at 831-336-2852.



Loyal Trust

Photo by Diane Sampson



Voles and Professional Pest Control

Marylin Wanlass

Santa Rosa Iris Society Newsletter 32(1): pages 1-2.

I have something I had never seen or heard of until I moved to my woodsy lot with lots of *Vinca minor* and a wonderful brook that has water in it three to four months a year. It's a mouse-like creature and looks like a cross of a mini version of a gopher and a mouse. Skinny to fat with a short tail, this vole is very shy. Just a bird flying by can send them scampering between flower pots or heading undercover in the *Vinca* and down a hole. They produce an abundance of networking tunnels underground and tunnel very deep to spend the winter and to breed and raise their young. It was a bit unnerving to be sitting in my small patio of potted iris and cannas and have one of these mouse-looking things begin jumping in, out, and around the potted plants!

Voles eat the leaves of small decorative sedums and other succulents, tiny iris shoots, and other plants. If the pot is large enough, I have had them make burrowing nests of my lawn grass, the straw hat of my wooden garden angel, and even my hay bale twine. But before I called the pest control company, I wanted to see what kept my two indoor cats guarding the patio through the glass door with their big blue eyes. The cats would even sleep with their heads thru the vertical blinds!

I had to have a better look at these creatures for myself, so I tried peanut butter on a dish on the top step by the patio door. That way the cats would "tell" me of any action. I put the peanut butter on crackers, and the voles worked on that shyly and would haul the crackers down a hole or to a more secluded spot, behind pots. Then I decided to try oatmeal, the small instant kind. Again, served in a small saucer, it became the fare of "dinner time". The voles would come from a variety of areas. Each had its own appearance, but all had the same style of eating. They filled their cheeks like fat chipmunks and would then go behind or undercover amongst the pots and spit out these "cheekfulls" and eat secretively. More and more came. The word was out: "free eats!" First one big fat one would come around the pots, very cautiously. Then another would spot the oatmeal, and it would take a shortcut across the patio. The cats went bonkers! This became their entertainment. Mine too! I had from two to six of these rodents literally fighting over the oatmeal. If one couldn't chase or bully some off—the fight was on. They would stand up kangaroo-style and butt each other with their chests—very amusing. The weather got hot and I slid open the glass door so that the cats had full view thru only the screen. Then one day one big fat vole decided to look for a new abode. It walked along the aluminum ledge casing of the patio door, stopped periodically and looked in the house, little paws pushing it up for a better view as it edged along the casing ledge. Glistening beady eyes peering

inside my abode. They seem to have no bones in their heads and can get it into the smallest of cracks, but my screen was tight. One cat was "lying in wait" as the other slept on top of the cat condo in the warm sun. The vole still edged along, looking up and in. Then at the precise moment it peered in, right into the cat's face, she didn't see it coming. The vole didn't see her and Surprise!, Surprise! As the vole peered in at the open door area, the cat sprang at it. Scared the vole silly—it jumped in the air, fell over backwards, and ran off to the safety of a vole hole in my iris.

When I witnessed these creatures eating my prize cacti from Anita Linscott, I called Clark Pest Control. Sorry kitties, the show was over. It took a good six weeks to cut the population. The cats watched for days after they were gone. I cannot say I am sad. My iris rhizomes can now sprout and grow, the nasty sowbugs, earwigs, tiny snails of which I seem to have two species, unwanted spiders and many other pests are no longer. My garden is recovering—a grand feeling!

Control of voles and some other pests require an extra fee, but now I see rhizome sprouts. Very few house spiders leave their webs for me. No voles or mice or rats to eat the spilled birdseed; the quail can now feast along with other ground feeding birds. I have a one year contract. The man comes every other month to spray and to rebait traps. He leaves me a note when he's been here, stating what he did. He comes in the "no fee" month to check traps and recheck the house for ants, spiders, etc. I am pleased and see results. Even the dwarf camellias seem happier!. The best part is, if you have any pest activity (ants, etc.) call him—he will come on a no-charge basis anytime you prove pest activity. When you move, the same great service moves with you to your new home, unless you write them to cancel the business calls.

My original first call was for ants in my oak tree. They were leaving piles of sawdust on the ground. On a sunny day I could see flecks of sawdust coming from a sunlit areas where an old branch had been cut off some years back. These ants had wide trails around my house. They would fall on me as I cut my hedges. They would bite and hang on, giving a "pinch". I couldn't brush them off and felt like a dog with a bad case of fleas! The ants emitted a "stink" when squashed, and then I had to head for the garage to disrobe and then shower. Clark Pest Control sprayed areas and after awhile, the ants were gone. Now I can work the gardens, free of falling, stinking ants! The oak tree is happy. So are my irises. These ants had a huge aphid colony they were tending. Thanks to Clark Pest Control, they are gone. Be sure to bottle the insects for the pest control company to identify so they can rid you of them more readily.

Note: Marylin's story included specific practices and timing employed by Clark Pest Control, so she was encouraged to name the business. The Santa Rosa Iris Society does not, however, endorse Clark over any other pest control business. Check your local yellow pages under "Pest Control Services"



DOOR PRIZES



1. **BLINDING LIGHT**, Ernst, Yellow amoena
2. **BOWLED OVER**, Ghio, S. pink; F. orchid, ruffled
3. **BRAGGIN RIGHTS**, Burseen, White, blue edge of F.; purple horns
4. **BROKEN RECORD**, Sutton, Violet, lined & splashed white, RE
5. **CLOTHED IN GLORY**, Kerr, Yellow; brown band on F.
6. **CREATIVE VISION**, Kerr, S. oyster; F. blackish red
7. **EXPLICIT**, Ghio, S. gold F. black maroon, yellow spray pattern
8. **GOSSIP COLUMN**, Sutton, S. pink, F. white, lavender horns
9. **HOOK UP**, Miller, Blue violet neglect, short horns
10. **JOYFUL SKIES**, Schreiner, Delphinium blue
11. **MY BLUE HEART**, O.Brown, AB, light blue
12. **PRETTY BUBBLES**, Ghio, S. peach, F. cream, bubbled
13. **PUBLIC SECRET**, Meek, S. blue, F. cocoa pink
14. **QUANTUM LEAP**, Sutton, Plum plicata, horns RE
14. **RODEO GIRL**, Schreiner, Yellow brown plicata, brown dotting on edges
15. **SANTA WAS HERE**, Niswonger, S. buff pink; F. white, buff shoulders
16. **STRAIGHT UP**, Sutton, Burgundy plicata; spooned beards
17. **STRANGE SENSATION**, Ernst, . grey-violet; F. peach
18. **SUNBREAK**, Keppel, IB, violet/rose luminata
19. **TRANSWORLD**, Davis '04, Blue-viole, white spot on F.
21. **HOSE SPRINKLER**, Bicolor with Silver tips and moving parts.
LAST ONE ONE THIS SEASON!



Joseph J. Ghio, Editor
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