

Newsletter of the Capital Hudson Iris Society

Volume 24

Number 9

October 2017

** 2017 Calendar * Mark your calendars now!*

Sunday, October 22: 1:30 p.m. **CHIS Meeting**, East Greenbush Community Library. Speaker: Douglass Paschal of the Historic Iris Preservation Society on "Guardian Gardens: Because the past and future could use a little help."

Sunday, November 19th: 1:00 p.m., **CHIS Holiday Party**. Pot luck luncheon, bring a wrapped gift if you'd like to participate in the gift exchange, door prizes include gift certificates to iris growers and garden centers.

December: No meeting

CHIS Contacts

CHIS Chair: *Linda Knipper,*
Linda.Montanaro@gmail.com
518 377-4987

Vice Chairs: *Dan and Joanne Maier,*
Danjomaier@gmail.com
518 449-8480

Secretary: *Virginia Dorwaldt,*
ymdorwaldt@gmail.com
518 439-3110

Treasurer: *Don Salhoff,*
driris2000@hotmail.com
518 439-1484

Newsletter editor: *Euthemia Matsoukas,*
EuthemiaMatsoukas@gmail.com
Or euthemia@nycap.rr.com
518 439-3758

Iris Show Chair: *Kathryn Mohr,*
kemohrke@aol.com
518 952-4995

** Join the American Iris Society *
www.irises.org*

Preserving Historic Irises: The Guardian Gardens Project

The Sunday, October 22nd meeting of the Capital Hudson Iris Society will feature speaker Douglass Paschal of the Historic Iris Preservation Society who will talk about the HIPS Guardian Gardens Project. His talk is entitled "Guardian Gardens: Because the past and future could use a little help."

The Guardian Gardens program of preservation, operating under the aegis of the Historic Iris Preservation Society, is altering the field of iris conservation in North America and now in Europe. A small but steadily growing membership is saving irises at a rate unimaginable only three years ago, when it was founded, and is forging alliances that will bring iris devotees closer together where we once stood -- at the forefront of horticultural practice. That effort is still in its infancy. This talk will introduce a program that will have a major impact on private and institutional botanical collection, preservation, and enjoyment. And who knows, maybe you have some of the missing irises!

Douglass Paschall, who will be coming to us from Landsdowne, Pennsylvania, is the grandson of iris hybridizers Thomas and Edna Williams. A member of several sections of the American Iris Society and associated societies, Mr. Paschall has been the Cultivar Preservation Chair of the Historic Iris Preservation Society for two years. Over the past year Doug has facilitated the transfer of older iris for several irisarians whose collections were about to be lost because they could no longer care for their collections. These distribution efforts promote the growing of rare historic cultivars in multiple areas of the country. Doug believes in being proactive about preserving the historic iris of the future as cultivars start disappearing from commerce long before they reach historic status. Many varieties from the 80's and early 90's are already disappearing. Irises, nevertheless, are but one piece of his botanical interests, which include native plants, fruit and nut orchards, food forests, and the ethics of assisted migration of threatened species.

The meeting will be held on Sunday, October 22nd, at 1:30 p.m. at the East Greenbush Community Library, Community Way, East Greenbush, New York. Coffee and goodies will begin at 1:30 and a short business meeting at 2:00 will precede the speaker. If you need driving directions to the library, you can go online to www.eastgreenbushlibrary.org, hit "contact us" and in the lower right corner is a map and a way to access directions. Or e-mail Euthemia or call her at 518 439-3758.

Please feel free to bring a friend and a snack to share. Our meetings are always free and open to the public. And they're always worth coming to!

Linda says...

Hello all –

Our bus trip to the New York Botanical Garden on Sunday, September 17, was an unqualified success. We had a waiting list for seats but in the end were able to accommodate almost everyone. The exhibits and the Dale Chihuly glass sculptures throughout the gardens were overwhelmingly beautiful. There was a consensus by attendees that we have to do the NYBG again, next time in the spring, and maybe even during the week. Fewer crowds and the opportunity to see their peonies, irises, and flowering trees will definitely make it worth taking the day off for those of us who may still be working (“sorry” from a new retiree!).

In October, Doug Paschall from the Historic Iris Preservation Society will give a talk on their project to save historic irises. He’s very knowledgeable and who knows, you might have some historic irises in your garden that they’re looking for!

On November 19th we will have our annual Holiday Party. We decided last year to move the party from early December to before Thanksgiving because December is always over-booked. The Holiday Party is a great potluck luncheon where we all bring our favorite dishes, be it a casserole, side dish, salad, appetizer or dessert. CHIS is known for great parties, in part because we have a lot of really good cooks in our midst. There will also be a gift exchange and gift certificate door prizes. See the article in column 2 for more details.

Let me know if you have any ideas for speakers for future meetings. And I hope to see you on October 22nd.

- Linda



Historic Iris Garden

11/19 Holiday Party

We’re having our Holiday Party in November again this year. It’s a potluck with door prizes of gift certificates from Iris Hybridizers, and a voluntary gift exchange. If you would like to participate in the gift exchange, bring a wrapped garden-related gift valued at around \$15 and bring home something new for yourself. Bring a dish to share and prepare for a feast. There will be more about the party in our November newsletter.

Fall Garden Chores

Care of plants during the growing season is relatively simple: keep weeds and grass tufts out of the rhizome clumps. But the fall, what do we do to help our plants overwinter, particularly our newly planted irises? Here are some guidelines from the American Iris Society.

Newly set plants should be kept moist until the roots are growing well. Established plants rarely need watering except during prolonged dry spells; at such times, deep, infrequent watering is best. Air circulation and sanitation are the best problem preventatives.

In the fall, remove old (dead) iris leaves and other debris from around the base of the plant. Old bloom stalks should be broken or cut off at ground level. In the late fall, iris foliage can be cut back to 4 or 5 inches above the rhizomes, and any dead foliage removed. This helps keep the clumps clean and free of pests such as borer and thrips, which can overwinter in dead iris foliage.

Winter mulching is recommended for newly planted irises to keep from losing them. Mulch provides an insulating effect that prevents the ground from thawing and freezing so much as the weather cycles from cold to warm and back again. Freezing weather will not harm the rhizomes, other than causing them to heave out of the ground as a result of successive freezes and thaws. A good remedy for this is to mulch with pine needles or salt grass after the ground has frozen. Pine needles or salt grass/hay do not hold water or get soggy, and can help prevent rot. Evergreen boughs also help. Wait until the ground is frozen to prevent mice from making homes under the mulch. In the early spring, usually late March, the mulch must be removed. If any roots have been heaved out of the ground, simply cover them with additional soil. Mulching of bearded irises is to be avoided during the growing season. If you desire to mulch the bed for appearance, you should NOT cover the rhizomes. The sun must reach them to facilitate development of next year’s increase.