



Evergreen Garden Club

The Wild Iris

Volume 18, Issue 4

April 2005

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EGC 2004-2005 Board Members

President:

Tricia Scott

Vice Presidents:

Karla Briggs

Beth Feldkamp

Secretary:

Joan Reynolds

Treasurer:

Lori Lapp

The **Wild Iris** is a free monthly publication for members of the Evergreen Garden Club.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month from Sept. to June at Church of the Hills, Buffalo Park Rd, Evergreen at 9:15 am. All are welcome.

For **membership** information please contact Lori Lapp at 303-838-8360 or membership@evergreengardenclub.org

Newsletter Contributions are due by the 20th of each month to Kathi Grider at 303-670-6909 or wegriders@speedtrail.net

Newsletter Editor & Website
Liz Hamilton liz1001@earthlink.net
editor@evergreengardenclub.org

A Word from the President...

Dear Members,
Last month's meeting was so wonderful with such beautiful pictures of such incredible gardens. I will make sure that we find out the date of the Boulder Garden Tour so that if any of you missed the beauty of the pictures that you can experience it close up...or even if you saw the pictures you could see it again! Thank you again to Niki Hayden.

Next month's meeting is Catherine Long of Longs Iris Gardens. I personally adore Irises because of their toughness combined with their delicate flowers. I have many of them in my garden and enjoy blooms most of our growing season. The first ones to show up are some of my dwarf ones; they remind me that the rest are yet to come.

Also at next month's meeting, we need to have nominations for board positions. It is important for everyone to consider what positions for next year would suit you. I have truly enjoyed being President but look forward to participating at a different position.

The past two years I have served on the board as president, I have been blessed with an incredible group of people to assist me- Beth, Karla, Joan, Lori and Louise. They have been at my side through personal tragedies, health issues and just anything that has come my way. We have laughed together, cried together and definitely acted silly together. It has been a wonderful ride.

I will also start making calls for filling in all our committee positions. If you could help me by emailing me or phoning me if you can stay on in your position, please do so. It would help me enormously. My intention in doing this is to make sure that the incoming President has all his/her positions in place.

It will allow them to concentrate on assisting with our booklet, the programs ahead and other duties as president.

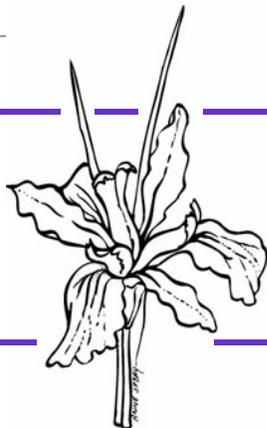
All of us on the board want the incoming board to be successful and confident in their positions.

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Membership Meeting - April 12, 2005 "Iris" Heritage Gardens

Catherine Long of Long's Iris Gardens will visit us with slides of her iris and lots of information about growing iris in Colorado. Her experience and love of the plants is a treasure for us to share. Catalogs will be available for or-

dering!
See you at 9:15 at Church of the Hills on Buffalo Park Rd. Remember to bring your plants and cuttings for the World Gardening table, and your coffee mug. See you there!



Garden Club News

Welcome new member Sandy Swan!!!

(Continued from Pres. Message Pg. 1)

We will all be available to those coming in to ensure that they are able to enjoy their new spots with the club. Please consider serving on our board; it is a great job because of all of the great members we have.

Happy spring to all of you! See you at the next meeting.

Tricia

P.S. I will be away March 30th through April 6th in B.C.

Tuppers Team is offering a **High Altitude Gardening Class** given by our very own **Karla Briggs**. It's always a treat to have Karla share her knowledge, wit & wisdom with us. Thurs. April 28th -7:00PM—Buchanan Recreation Center
The class is free but seating is limited. Call Tuppers Team 303-670-6358 to RSVP.
See you there!

Did you know?

Botanists say that trees need the powerful March winds to flex their trunks and main branches, so the sap is drawn up to nourish the budding leaves. Perhaps we need the gales of life in the same way, though we dislike enduring them. ~Jane Truax

RELAY FOR LIFE
Last year the Garden Club participated in the Relay For Life. Our team won the best tent award, most money raised & most individual money raised! I am hoping that we can do a team again this year. This year's Relay will be held in July at the West Jeff. Middle School. (Both High Schools are getting their tracks redone this summer.)
Participants need to be able to walk the track for a minimum of 1 hour at a scheduled time & also pledge to raise at least \$100.00. It is an incredible night & even in the pouring rain last year we had a really fun time & the rewards in our hearts were beyond words.
The Relay For Life is a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society - Thousands of Relay are held in communities worldwide. It is an all-night event where a member from each team is walking the track at all times. There is food, a bonfire, last year there was live music & lots of other entertainment. Silly games, fun costumes & a free T-shirt also make the evening memorable!
If you are interested in being on our team (maybe we can do ??), please contact Joan Reynolds at 303 674-5965 or joansew@aol.com.

Note: The Wild Iris welcomes submissions regarding gardening that you would like to share with the club, please contact Kathy Grider at 303-670-6909 or email them to her at wegridders@speedtrail.net by the 20th of each month.

Minutes of the March 8, 2005 Meeting

President Tricia Scott called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. Thirty-two members were present.

Treasurer, Lori Lapp reported that we have \$70.76 in checking and \$6759.34 in savings for a total net worth of \$6830.10.

Secretary Joan Reynolds read a thank you note from Bootstraps; she also had a large packet of thank you notes and correspondence from the benefactors of our World Gardening donation. Joan announced that Bill Zendig who, with his wife Barb, had been on our Garden Tour in 2003, is in very poor health with cancer of the brain. Joan said she would keep the members apprised of his health and encouraged anyone that knew them to send cards (Bill has since passed away).

Joan also announced that the Canyon Courier has invited the club to write an article for their monthly Real Estate supplement about mountain gardening. They would like articles of 800 to 1000 words with three or four photos as well as a photo of the writer. We will initially use this as a way to promote the upcoming Garden Tour. She said that hopefully this wouldn't be a huge undertaking with "Over the Garden Fence" articles and also 'Horticulture' articles from the Wild Iris to 'borrow' a copy from.

Louise Mounsey asked for help with World Gardening. Volunteers were promptly forthcoming! Tricia showed a copy of an old Evergreen Nursery Mountain Plant Guide booklet that we are pursuing to re-publish with their permission for our 40th anniversary next year. Karla Briggs is our liaison on this project.

Tricia also asked for any volunteers to help oversee the April 13 High School Community Work Day. Seven students are lined up to touch up and repair our wooden directional signs. She also asked if anyone can please store them at their home after they are dry. A sign up was also circulated for Earth Day on April 23. Members decided that bringing some of our beautiful scrapbooks for our table and some colorful plants along with would attract attendees. There will be membership forms on the table as well.

Tricia also reported that K. D. Moore Gallery will be having an 'In the Garden Display' when we have our Garden Tour and would help to promote the Tour. Members also discussed the phone message line. It was decided to get accurate information as to what is currently available before any decisions are made. Suggestions were made to add more information on our website. Liz Hamilton was not present, but will be asked if current and upcoming happenings can be added.

Tricia will pick a date for the 40th Anniversary Committee to meet. A Garden Tour Committee meeting was scheduled to meet after the March 8 general meeting concluded but was rescheduled because of time. A new member, Sandy Swan was introduced.

Christine Gray expressed her thanks for receiving the club's card and good wishes for her son, who was recently deployed to Iraq. She had "instant messaged" with him the previous weekend and he sounded well.

The members adjourned for a social time and snacks, followed by the door prize drawings. Niki Hayden then presented a gorgeous slide show of Colorado gardens with a delightful flair and narrative. She had her books for sale after the program. Her lovely slides and friendly and knowledgeable program kept everyone entertained. She thoughtfully included a thorough handout of the many plants in her slides.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Reynolds
Secretary

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My Favorite Flower.....by Jean Todd

I love beards. specifically the tall, bearded iris -my favorite flower. These lovely, fragrant, regal flowers are named after the Greek goddess of the rainbow and come in most of the colors of the rainbow except true red. There are many varieties featuring solid color blossoms, blended colors, contrasting petals, and some with a broad band of color around basically white flowers. Some of the newer varieties, described as 'remontant', flower a second time in late summer or autumn, though rather erratically and not at my altitude -8200'.

Irises are natives of the temperate regions of the northern hemisphere, the eastern Mediterranean and Central Asia. They grow and flower as well in the Rocky Mountain region as anywhere in the world. All you need is a sunny location and well-drained soil-irises don't like to sit with soggy feet and will often develop rhizome rot. These perennials are well suited to poor soils and tolerant of drought, although flowering is best with moderate irrigation. They need cold winters and hot, dry summers to flourish.

In bloom from late May to mid-June, irises are great with many other perennials, and in my garden the columbines and snow-in-summer are happy companions. I have some bearded iris planted in a big half -barrel planter, but they are not very happy and take much more water and care.

The old irises blooming in my garden were there when we moved to Evergreen and are probably *Iris gennanica* or common flag, German Iris. This easy to grow rhizomatous, bearded species multiplies rapidly into large clumps. The sparsely branched stem produces up to six yellow-bearded, blue-purple to blue-violet flowers in spring. Another variety has reddish purple falls (lower petals) with upright standards of a more blue-purple shade, and the beard is white with yellow tips. See this old iris in the oval post office garden. The bearded hybrids are often classified under *Iris gennanica* or *I. pallida* which are just two of their ancestral species. Tall bearded irises are the most popular class of irises, with by far the largest number of hybrid cultivars.

Rhizomatous irises have sword-shaped leaves arranged in a basal fan, are sometimes evergreen (not at our elevation), and are subdivided into three groups: bearded (or flag) irises with a tuft of hairs (the 'beard') on the three lower petals; beardless irises without the tuft; crested or Evansia irises, with a raised crest instead of a beard. Each flower has six petals: three outer petals, called 'falls' which droop away from the center and alternate with the three inner petals, called 'standards'.

The main group of bearded irises consists of numerous species with thick, creeping rhizomes and countless hybrids bred from these. Both species and hybrids can be subdivided into three classes; tall to three feet or so, intermediate to about 24 inches, and dwarf six to 15 inches. The dwarf irises are the earliest bloomers, the flowers sometimes braving the snow. Intermediates come next, about two weeks after the dwarfs, and then the tall beards are the last to bloom. I have one tall bearded hybrid called "Zebra" that has small, very fragrant violet flowers with beautiful variegated (vertically striped) foliage that makes a good accent plant for a garden.

The Sunset Western Garden Book recommends bearded iris for Zones 1- 24. In our cold winter zones plant during July or August. Space rhizomes one to two feet apart, set tops barely beneath the soil surface and spread the roots well. Growth continues from the leafy end of the rhizome, so point that end in the direction you want the plant to grow. Water well until new growth shows, and then

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Over The Garden Fence *By Karla Briggs*

TRAGEDY STRIKES!

"It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." This winter our greenhouse was beyond lovely. Each day brought new blooms and growth to the plants. It was a joy to open the door to the fragrance and beauty inside. I had finally gotten the hang of watering, pest eradication and pruning the residents. No longer were there wilted, rangy looking specimens--all of the plants were in good form.

My grandmother used to say "I can't have nothin' nice" whenever something got broken, lost or "stolen". Well, I was robbed by a malfunctioning heater that left in its wake black death. I opened the door of the greenhouse to find mushy and graying plants decomposing before my very eyes. I was in shock upon witnessing the horror that once was a paradise.

After our last close call with a malfunctioning heater, we installed a temperature controlled alarm to alert us of temps too high or too low in the greenhouse. Unfortunately, when the house is closed up for the winter and things go awry in the middle of a frigid night, that alarm can beep itself stupid and we are blissfully unaware of the carnage taking place.

I took several days to sulk and feel guilty for allowing my charges to die. I then drug my sorry self up to the greenhouse and set about the horrid task of throwing away five years worth of work. A few plants may have survived the arctic blast, but that remains to be seen. An orchid, olive tree, lemon tree, bay leaf plant, rosemary plant and some seedlings on a heater mat may live to tell the cautionary tale to other unsuspecting plants that are brought to live in the greenhouse.

There is no moral to be learned or Pollyanna wisdom to be culled from this disaster. The only remedy is to go plant shopping. We are also installing a strobe light in the house to warn us of any further technical difficulties in the greenhouse. I hope that as children of the sixties we don't assume we are having a flashback when the light starts strobing and our only response is to put the Rolling Stones on the hi-fi and dance while the plants die.

Karla

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regularly until fall rains, frost or snow comes along. The irises in my garden are watered by a timed irrigation system twice a day in summer, five minutes each time. A soaker hose would also do well. Use a moderate nitrogen fertilizer when growth begins in the spring and after blooming has finished. Cut off old bloom stalks when the flowers fade and remove old and dry leaves in fall.

Iris clumps become overcrowded in three or four years and blooms decrease. Lift and divide clumps in July or three weeks after flowers fade. Throwaway any dried-out, mushy or iris borer infected rhizomes; cut apart healthy ones, trim the fans back to six inches and replant. Dig in a bucketful of compost or well-rotted manure and a handful of balanced fertilizer or super phosphate to help these heavy feeders on their way. Many irises do not bloom the first year after planting or dividing. I have learned not to divide my iris very often as they do not get overcrowded as quickly at this elevation. I have lost bloom stalks during some late heavy frosts. The stalk is very tender and while still down in the leaf sheath can be frozen while the rest of the plant is not effected. As a distinct bonus, though, the elk looking for salad greens have left the irises -blossoms and all - alone!

Bearded iris flowers are beautiful cut flowers, and the fragrant buds will continue to open in the house. If a heavy frost is predicted, cut the bloom stalks and bring them inside to enjoy. These gorgeous beards are one of spring's great anticipations in the garden and worthy of the care they need. Much information is available from many sources; the Helen Fowler Library of Denver Botanic Gardens or through interlibrary loan, the Sunset Western Garden Book, Botanica's Annuals and Perennials (Laurel Glen Publishing), The American Iris Society, and Longs Gardens in Boulder. I have received many beautiful varieties from relatives in Hanford, California who have an extensive iris garden in their orchard of walnut trees.

Some of my favorite hybrids:



Dime a Dance



Laced Cotton



Mary Frances



Afternoon Delight



Spinning Wheel

HORTICULTURE

Moving bulbs in the green

By John Emmanuel

White Flower Farm newsletter

You can never plant too many bulbs. But you can plant them in the wrong place, a problem that won't make itself known until spring. Fortunately, bulbs are easily moved in spring—"in the green" is the term use to describe this process. It's an easy way to correct mistakes, change your mind, or spread around bulbs that have self-propagated.

Which bulbs can be moved in flower? All spring bulbs can be moved, although those in flower will probably fade faster than those left in the ground. But so what? We have them where we now want them—next year will be great!

Many bulbs, Narcissus being one of them, reproduce at a remarkable rate and can be lifted and divided with ease when in flower. The flowers fade quickly and should be removed to allow all the plants' energy to return to the bulb. The leaves will yellow earlier than the leaves of untouched bulbs.

This toughness/flexibility/malleability is also useful when ordering species or varieties of bulbs we don't know but want to try. Sometimes we can picture a well-suited location in one of the beds, based on what we know about that bed at the flowering time of that bulb. We plant the bulbs in the fall knowing that if we don't like the combination after all, we can move it while it's in flower to a more preferable spot. That way we can insert them into the already existing patch without damaging the earlier residents.

Lifting and resetting bulbs in flower:

1. Dig out a clump of bulbs gently with a curved nosed spade. Be sure to include a good amount of soil.
2. Dig new hole, enrich with compost.
3. Set bulbs in new hole at the same depth as before. Tamp down earth with flat side of spade, water well.

John Emmanuel is Associate Director of Horticulture at Wave Hill.



Happy Spring!



Early March, gray, quiet skies, and brown, quiet earth; leafless and sad and lonely enough out there in the damp and silence, yet there I stood feeling the same rapture of pure delight in the first breath of spring that I used to as a child...

~Elizabeth von Arnim

There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter. ~Rachel Carson



Evergreen Garden Club
PO Box 1393
Evergreen, Colorado 80437
www.evergreengardenclub.org



Denver Botanic Gardens Schedule of Events

www.botanicgardens.org

North American Rock Garden Society

Location: Mitchell Hall, Gates Hall and Garden Court

April 9, 2005

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Free with Gardens admission

For more information, contact Randy Tatroe at 303-699-8958.

Free Days

Denver Botanic Gardens

April 18, 2005 - April 18, 2005

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Ikebana International

Admission: Mitchell Hall

April 29, 2005 - April 30, 2005

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free with Gardens admission

For more information, contact Marie Shaw at 970-482-7886.