

MT. DIABLO IRIS SOCIETY NEWS

JANUARY 2026



The Mt. Diablo Iris Society exists for the purpose of stimulating and fostering interest in the propagation, culture and hybridizing of the genus Iris. As well the scientific and horticultural education of all those interested in learning about any phase of the genus Iris, and in the protection of these plants in their native habit.

▶▶ **MDIS Meeting** ◀◀
▶▶ **Sunday, January 11th, 1-3 pm** ◀◀
▶▶ **San Ramon Community Center** ◀◀
12501 Alcosta Blvd, San Ramon

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year MDIS,

There is a whole new year of events, meetings, and iris planting and admiring to do. The winter has brought good rains so far and really great weeds. Keep ahead of them as you can. I have begun my weeding and dead leaf removal as all the leaves are done from the last season. I never think I can get it all done, but it comes together faster as we get closer. So, get out there when it's dry enough and don't forget to fertilize in early February if needed.

We will have a new kind of meeting this month. We will have Jennifer McKay from Adelaide, Australia speaking to us by zoom to our meeting location in San Ramon. She has been instrumental in setting up an iris walk at a local Park/rose garden. People visit and learn about irises and how they work in their landscape. Adelaide is 18 hours ahead of us, so she will be joining us at 8am the next day. Please come join us for this new experience and see if this is something we want to do for

future meetings. A big thank you to Sergey for setting up the Zoom account.

One final thought, I sincerely would like to Thank Kathy Oldham for her years of service to Mt. Diablo Iris Society. She became our VP in 2019. The first year was a normal year and then Covid19 hit. There were no meetings for several months, no shows and no gatherings. Due to this, we extended the board positions an extra year. By April of 2022, Kathy had assumed the presidency and fulfilled her position and became VP again. Behind the scenes, she has been a solid support for the board and society. A historian, securing our San Ramon meeting space and our board meeting space in Walnut Creek. She has been great at following precedent when we didn't know there was one. She enjoys everything about gardening and has been a huge asset to our society. Please thank her at the meeting or the next time you find a moment. We are better for all she has provided over the 15+ years she has been a member. Thank you, Kathy!

Sincerely,
Jeff Bennett

January Meeting

We will be holding our Jan 11th meeting from 1-3pm at San Ramon Community Center, 12501 Alcosta Blvd, San Ramon, CA

Jennifer McKay of Adelaide is going to be speaking to us all the way from Adelaide, Australia about the "Iris Discovery Walk" she worked hard to create at a public garden there. Join us at the meeting for her presentation via Zoom.

Social Lunch Prior To Meeting

Some of us plan to have lunch before the meeting at 11:30. Feel free to join us. We will be at:

PANERA, 3121 Crow Canyon Place
San Ramon, CA

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2026

Jan 12	MDIS Meeting, San Ramon Community Center
Feb 9	MDIS Meeting, San Ramon Community Center
Mar 9	MDIS Meeting, San Ramon Community Center
Apr 24	MDIS Meeting & Alden Lane Setup, Livermore
Apr 25-26	Alden Lane Show & Fundraiser

Upcoming AIS Events

May 15-17	Region 14 Spring Regional Reno, CA
May 19-26	National Convention Newark, NJ

Riley Probst was Awarded the 2025 AIS Distinguished Service Medal

If you know Riley, you know he is so deserving of this award. If you don't know Riley, take the time to get to know him – he's a terrific guy! Either way, read the article near the end of this newsletter to learn about his contributions to the iris world and his astonishing hours of service. We are fortunate and honored to have him as a member of our club!

IRIS TOURS AT RUTH BANCROFT GARDENS

MAY 2, 2026 -- SAVE THE DATE

From Jacki at Ruth Bancroft Garden:

I am eyeing Sat, May 2nd for an "Iris extravaganza" where we celebrate Ruth's gardening past and all things Iris.

From your great list, I am thinking we could include:

- *Showing of past Virtual Iris Shows that include relaxing music and beautiful photos of named iris.*
- *The half hour walking tours through Ruth's Garden would be offered but it would include a half hour presentation in advance - meeting in the Great Room or patio.*
 - *Maybe 30 min talk (or visiting the stations about science, growing, take your pic) followed by a 20-30 min tour?*
 - *We could launch these every 30 min or so???*
- *An area of chairs where there could be displays about planting iris, dividing iris, etc. MDIS members would be there to talk about planting and dividing and answer questions, and/or the science area manned by MDIS members to talk about chromosomes, hybridizing, colors, etc from a purely scientific standpoint.*
- *An area to sell our potted iris inside rather than at Ruth's Iris Garden.*

- *AND we could also offer tea, an area to sit and converse and enjoy a cup of tea - which could also be the area with the music and iris playing in the background.*

I also have a group of botanical illustrators who are hoping to display and sell some Iris paintings at the event...

It is worth mentioning that the Bancroft's gardener Martin will likely not be maintaining the iris this year as he is having surgery, but nonetheless I think we could still offer a tour coupled with a talk in the Great Room. We have some volunteers who could weed a bit. Iris will likely not get divided this year, nor fully weeded. My sense is the tour will not be as good but we are adding other fun elements that will balance it out...

From Jan:

We will need all of our members to help out. This is a great opportunity to fulfill our mission of increasing the awareness and appreciation of iris. There will be a sign-up sheet at the January meeting. Come all day or just morning or afternoon. We will need:
Tour guides in Ruth's iris garden – to answer questions
Demonstrators to show how to plant and divide iris
Someone to “man” the video presentations
People to sell potted iris and fertilizer and take the money
Someone to describe iris science – hybridizing, the parts of an iris, etc

Iris Catalog Constant Gardener Farm

The 2026 Constant Gardener Farm catalog, featuring iris hybridized by Elizabeth Rieniets, is available. We have a PDF of the catalog and we can send it to anyone who requests it. Elizabeth is a (remote) member of our club. She plans to generously donate some of her newest iris to our July 2026 auction! Thank you Elizabeth.

FOLLOWING PAGES for

→ **January DOOR PRIZE IRIS** pg 3-5

→ **Distinguished Service Medal:
Riley Probst** pg 6-7

→ **November Meeting Minutes** pg 8-11

MDIS Door Prizes – JAN 2026

(Iris photos and descriptions are courtesy of commercial hybridizers and wiki.irises.org.)



SWIRLING SURF (Keppel 2025) TB, 36”, M. Standards near lobelia blue in center, paling to violine toward edge, narrow paler rim; falls violet blue, slightly paler veining, lightening toward pale narrow edge, white heart; luminata; beards white base, martius yellow tips.



LIGHTNING STORM (Mego 2024) TB, 35”, M-L. Standards vivid yellow, veined burgundy brown, burgundy brown edge; falls black, white haft marks in throat blending to dark yellow at ends of beard; beards vivid orange-yellow; slight sweet fragrance.



AZTEC FIREBIRD (Tasco 2025) AB (OGB-), 26", M. Standards red-purple; falls red-purple, nickel sized black signal; beards yellow throat, yellow middle, white end; slight sweet fragrance.



BOX OF SUNSHINE (Black 2025) TB, 35", L. Standards pale tan-gold, blending to wide mid tan-gold band; falls white, light grey texture veins, mid tan-gold hafts, narrow blended tan-gold band; beards mid gold; slight spicy fragrance.



WONDERFUL TONIGHT (Dash 2025) TB, 41". M. Standards rosy brown; style arms rosy brown; falls red-brown, with tan rim; beards burnt orange.



ANOTHER CHAPTER (Schreiner 2023) TB, 46.5" !, E-M. Standards white with wide blue-purple border; style arms n/a; falls white with blue-purple plicata stitching; beards blue; pronounced sweet fragrance.



TWIZZLER (Black 2025) MDB, 7", EM. Standards light caramel tan, mid slate wine plicata on interior; falls light caramel tan ground, dark slate wine plicata markings, narrow light caramel tan band; beards mid dark tangerine.



ARKENSTONE (Kanarowski 2021) TB, 31", M. Standards pale yellow, pink midrib and base, upward pink veining; falls soft lavender-blue, $\frac{3}{8}$ " texas sandstone rim; beards tangerine in throat, yellow in middle, ends white; diamond dusted; slight musky fragrance.



PARISIAN BREEZE (Sutton 2024) TB, 25", E-M.
Standards light yellow-pink, gold gilt edge; falls pale yellow-pink darkening to strong yellow-pink at edge of 1.5" strong purple band at edge of petal, greyed orange wire rim; beards brilliant green-yellow; sweet fragrance.



GRACIOUS SMILE (Miller 2025) BB, SA, 27", E.
Standards pink-salmon; falls purple, washed paler in center; beards tangerine orange, full purple flounce edged dark pink appendages; slight musky fragrance.



THIS IS ME (Johnson 2023) TB, 36", M-L.
Standards deep plum; falls lavender-blue with plum band, brown rayed patch on either side of beard; beards humungous, bushy, old gold; pronounced sweet fragrance.



LEFT AN IMPRINT (Johnson 2025) TB, 37", M.
Standards light lavender; falls deep lavender, with purple black bar across the hafts; beards orange; slight sweet fragrance.

The American Iris Society depends on a few good people doing a lot of work to make the society thrive. Riley Probst has been one of those people since he first joined in 1982.



THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL Riley Probst – 2025 Distinguished Service Medal recipient

is awarded in recognition of outstanding service to The American Iris Society at the national level. Service is judged on the basis of amount and quality of work done in such capacities as Board members, national officer, judges' training activity that is national in scope, writing for the national publication and other less tangible but vital acts of national service.

Riley's life is iris and he is greatly appreciated at the local and regional levels for his value to clubs as a knowledgeable resource and selfless volunteer. At once, you are struck by Riley's gentle demeanor and willingness to engage in iris discussions. Riley's name appears as a winner on many of our club trophies and is always a serious competitor in any of our iris shows. Riley has contributed hours and hours and hours to his passion. He is appreciated throughout our region and was honored by Region 14 with the Larry Gaulter Lifetime Achievement Award.

Riley's list of contributions to iris and AIS is both exhaustive and exhausting.

- He is a Lifetime AIS member and has served two terms as a Director on the AIS Board.
- He has written articles for the AIS Bulletin, had a great many photographs published in the bulletin and other AIS and regional publications, and has hundreds of photos on the AIS Encyclopedia (wiki).
- He has chaired or been editor for the AIS RVP Handbook revision and for 19 years has been a director or chairperson for AIS committees.
- In addition to chairing a national AIS convention, he has volunteered in public national convention gardens, hosted gardens at both regional (14 and 18) and society section conventions, been the AIS symposium chairman for 13 years, and attended 34 national conventions.
- Riley has been a founding member, officer, or director of at least five different AIS section societies.
- He has presented iris programs in many states.
- He has 14 iris hybrids with eight having won AIS awards (so far), including the Walther Cup, three Williamson-White Medals, and a Sass Medal.
- As if this weren't enough, he has been a garden judge, Master Judge, and a Judge Emeritus for AIS. Locally, he is our "go-to" judge because of his knowledge and professionalism. Riley has done judges' trainings in at least ten states.
- At the regional level, Riley has been an RVP and a regional director.

But where it really matters to all of us is at the affiliate level. Riley is a skilled grower, presenter, and exhibitor. He has won Best of Show 30 times with several different iris types, has earned 18

Silver Medals and 31 Bronze Medals, and has been every kind of officer in 13 different local iris clubs. When anyone in our club wants information on an iris or wants an iris identified, we all turn to Riley. Riley is an honorable man. He is patient and kind with all the club members, regardless of their iris knowledge. He promotes the love and appreciation of iris and encourages all of us to learn more about iris and be more involved in iris culture and AIS, to foster the world of iris.



Mt. Diablo Iris Society Monthly Meeting Minutes **November 9, 2025**

Attendees included: Jeff Bennett, Jan Blaedel, Ethan DeMara, Marilyn Kaplan, Sergey Melnikov, Carl Meier, Fred Newlan, Kathy Oldham, Eileen Roark, Riley Probst, Ken Walker, Corinna Wise, Linda Woods
Guests: Janet Caprile, invited by Marilyn Kaplan Quorum 10 ? Yes

The Mt. Diablo Iris Society monthly meeting was called to order by president, Jeff Bennett at 1:15 PM at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center.

The minutes of the **October 2025** were approved. Motion was made by Riley Probst and seconded by Sergey Melnikov. Motion passed unanimously.



Alan and Pat Robbins made an appearance and donated a screen print Show Sign from 1982
-They had to leave due to another commitment-THANK YOU ALAN

Door Prize iris drawing: TB iris unless otherwise marked

BORN TO PARTY (Johnson 2023) – Corinna Wise
FALCON HEART (Johnson 2025) – Kathy Oldham
GOLD JEWELRY (Black 2025) **BB** - Fred Newlan
INK AND PINK (Kanarowski 2025) - Ethan DeMara
IRIDESCENT (Shadlow 2024) - Linda Woods
JOINT SESSION (Keppel 2025 - Riley Probst
LOVE ME FOREVER (Tasco 2023) - Corinna Wise
OLD SPORT (Schreiner 2025) – Sergey Melnikov
OREGON BOUND (Schreiner 2025) - Eileen Roark
SAND AND SURF (Van Liere 2024) - Linda Woods
SODALICIOUS (Johnson 2025) **IB** – Eileen Roark
SWORD OF THE JEDI (Dash 2025) – Jeff Bennett

Rebloomers brought by Riley:

FOND REMEMBRANCE – Marilyn Kaplan
I I STUTTER – Carl Meier
MAD ABOUT SAFFRON – Jan Blaedel
PERFUME COUNTER – Fred Newlan
SKY HOPPER – Marilyn Kaplan

Program: Riley Probst REBLOOMING IRIS as presented at the 2025 AIS National Convention

<https://youtu.be/b7-l5HNhAwQ> MDIS YouTube presentation with music

Four steps to foster reblooms:

- Plant your iris in full sun
- Water every three weeks – except during the rainy season
- Fertilize 2-3 times per year – Valentines Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day

- Plant iris known to rebloom in your USDA zone

If your iris reblooms, notify AIS of place and date – fill our report on the website, Reblooming Iris Society
 Read AIS about rebloomers because those that rebloom in colder climes may not rebloom in our area
 Join the Reblooming Iris Society (RIS) \$8 per year

64 Classic Rebloomers – Rebloom well in USDA zones 6-9 Riley’s video is by year. Below by alpha. Historics before 1996

Anxious	Gold Reprise	Perfume Counter
Autumn Bugler	Halloween Halo	Pink Attraction
Autumn Circus	Happy New Year	Pure as Gold
Autumn Echo	Harvest of Memories	Queen Dorothy
Autumn Tryst	Hemstitched	Recurring Dream
Barn Dance	High Ho Silver	Renown
Blatant	Illini Repeater	Rosalie Figge
Buckwheat	Juicy Fruit	Shoot the Moon
Cantina	Lady Essex	Speed Limit
Christopher Columbus	Lilting	Sugar Blues
Clarence	Maiden	Total Recall
Corn Harvest	Matrix	Violet Music
Earl of Essex	Mesmerizer	Winesap
Eggnog	Midnight Caller	Zurich
Forever Yours	My Friend Jonathan	

Suggested “sure-fire” rebloomer formula: When you plant your rebloomer rhizomes, put 1 T powdered milk in the bottom of the hole before planting. Hasn’t done much for Riley’s rebloomers.

Daughter of Stars	Honey Scoop	Over and Over
Double Shot	I Repeat	Platinum
Duo Dandy	Mariposa Autumn	Priscilla of Corinth
Forever Gold	Masterwork	Purple Magic
Garden Club Delight	Next in Line	Raspberry Frost
Golden Immortal PBF	October Sky	Winter Queen

Newer Rebloomers

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Ann Marie Adams	Early Morning Rayz	Metro Blue
Artistic Showoff	Edge of the World	Milk in my coffee
Austin City Blues	Forever Orange SDB	Molokini
Autumn Breeze	Good Morning Beautiful	Momma Rosemary
Autumn Explosion	Grand Bargain	Multnomah Falls
Autumn Garnet	Highway to Heaven	Power Lines by Probst
Autumn Showers	I I Stutter	Rhizome Cowboy
Autumn Sunburst	Joy Returns	Royalty Remembered
Blackbird Stars	Lest We Forget	Shattered Dreams
Broke Again	Liquid Amber	Spring Bliss
Champion Bloodlines	Lunar Whitewash* substance	Tillamook Bay
Corn Dance	Mad About Saffron	Triple Dip
Cornhusker	Mammoth Orange	Western Outlaw

Reports: Treasurer – Sergey Melnikov - 16715.23 checking Savings 6449.60

Show Chairs – Virtual Show will start in January and Alden Lane Show will be April 25-26, 2026
 MDIS and SBMIS are coordinating our virtual shows so that people unable to
 Combine their four pictures into one file will have another venue. In February or
 March, Jan Blaedel and Mary Sindicic will be offering iris grooming classes at
 Alden Lane Nursery for new members to learn how to groom for a bench show
 And how to enter pictures in a virtual show.

Correspondence: Jean Richter, membership chair for AIS, is letting us know when there is a new
 AIS member in our area. Jan Blaedel emails them with MDIS information and
 Linda Woods sends them a newsletter to introduce them to our club. We have
 two prospective members as a result of this.

Announcements:

- Jeff Bennett is Seed Chair for the Aril Society.
- Jeff Bennett is speaking at the Danville-Alamo Garden Club in February
- Kevin Vaughn won the Hybridizer of the Year Award
- 2026 AIS Convention will be in New Jersey-register early as spaces are limited to 200
- January Speaker is from Australia – Jennifer McKay – Discovery Walk in Adelaide Botanical Garden
- Just a reminder: if you received a notice that your membership expires in December, pay Sergey today to keep current and up-to-date. Jan Blaedel will send notices to members whose membership expires.
- Open the Newsletter as a PDF. IF you just open it in Google Docs (clicking on it in your email) you will miss any highlighted items and internet documents.
- Consider volunteering to be president, vice-president, or secretary.
- Put your volunteer hours next to your name on the sign-in sheet.
- Reminder: Jan-Mar meetings will be 1 PM – 3 PM in San Ramon
- Sept-Nov meetings will be 12:45 – 3:15 PM in Pleasant Hill -Check your newsletter

- Check the SHARE TABLE: Fudge celebrating the November birthdays, including Kathy and Linda.

Mums from Kathy, and other goodies

New Business: Does anyone want to pre-order fertilizer for January. \$10 per gallon – 8 pounds

Email MtDiabloIris@gmail.com if you want fertilizer in January.

Janet, Marilyn, and Sergey signed up.

Agenda items you would like to submit to the **MDIS Board** for the January meeting – send

To MtDiabloIris@gmail.com

Great News! Riley Probst was awarded the 2025 AIS Distinguished Service Medal. See article in this newsletter.

Respectfully submitted, Jan Blaedel, Secretary

Approved

Following the meeting, a Board meeting was held to approve the expenditure of \$200 for ZOOM. Motion made by Linda Woods and seconded by Kathy Oldham. Passed unanimously.

Present: Jeff Bennett, Jan Blaedel, Sergey Melnikov, Kathy Oldham, and Linda Woods

Sergey Melnikov will set up ZOOM for the January meeting. Our speaker will be Jennifer McKay of Adelaide, Australia.

MT. DIABLO IRIS SOCIETY IS AN AFFILIATE OF THE AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY AND REGION 14. VISIT THE REGION WEBSITE: WWW.AISREGION14.ORG

Dues are \$12.50 annual or \$30.00 tri-annual, Please send payment to club treasurer.

American Iris Society dues – \$30 print only, \$45 print and Emembership. Dual and multiple year pricing available. Visit: <https://www.irises.org/ais-memberships-emember/>

YOUR CURRENT BOARD:

President – Jeff Bennett, e-mail: jeff13bennett@gmail.com

Vice-President – Kathy Oldham

Treasurer – Sergey Melnikov

Secretary – Jan Blaedel, Secretary: mtdiabloiris@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor - Linda Woods, e-mail: linda.woods@comcast.net

Directors – Jan Blaedel, Carl Meier

Past President – Kathy Oldham