

*characteristics*

These majestic, easy to grow perennials are available in an array of colors, sizes, and varieties. There are seven major classifications of Iris: Bulbous, Dutch, Tall bearded, Dwarf bearded, Japanese, Siberian, and Spuria.

*planting*

Iris should be planted in full sun by September so that the roots of the plant are well established before the end of the season. Plant so that the tops of the rhizomes are exposed and the roots are spread out facing downward in the soil. Tamp the soil firmly and then water to help settle the soil. Proper depth is critical. Plant 12" to 24" apart. Plants spaced further apart will need less frequent thinning.

Iris grow in well-drained soil. Plant in raised beds or on a slope to ensure good drainage. If your soil is heavy, coarse sand or humus may be added to improve drainage. Gypsum is an excellent soil conditioner that can improve most clay soils. The ideal pH is 6.8 (slightly acidic), but Iris are tolerant in this regard. To adjust the pH of your soil, lime may be added to acidic soils or sulfur to alkaline soils.

*care & maintenance*

Newly-set plants need moisture to help their root systems become established. After that, deep waterings at long intervals is better than frequent, shallow waterings. Do not overwater.

Bone meal and Superphosphate are both effective for food. A light application in the spring and another about one month after bloom. Using a fertilizer high in nitrogen will cause root rot in iris.

Keep the iris beds free of weeds and debris so that the tops of the rhizomes can receive sun. Bloom stems should be cut off close to the ground after blooming. Remove any diseased or brown leaves.

Every 3-4 years, thin or divide iris to prevent overcrowding, which can impair blooming and cause disease. Old clumps may be thinned by removing the old divisions at the centers of the clumps and leaving new growth in the ground. Or, you may dig up the entire clump and remove and replant the large new rhizomes.

*Tall Bearded Iris*



*Japanese Iris*



*Spuria Iris*



TONAWANDA

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