



BEARDED IRIS

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CASE

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BEARDED IRIS

KINDS OF IRIS - There are approximately 200 species of iris. Several of these species can be purchased in many varieties. Most commonly grown in the Northern Hemisphere are the bearded iris. These are represented by several size groups. The three most common size groups are; dwarf, intermediate and tall.

Dwarf bearded iris include varieties less than 12 inches in height. Intermediate bearded iris are 12 inches to 28 inches in height. Tall bearded iris run from about 28 inches to five feet. They give a season of bloom extending from early May to mid-June, one class merging into the other. The intermediates are actually results of crossing the early dwarfs and the late, tall bearded iris. They are as the name implies, intermediate in season of flowering and in height.

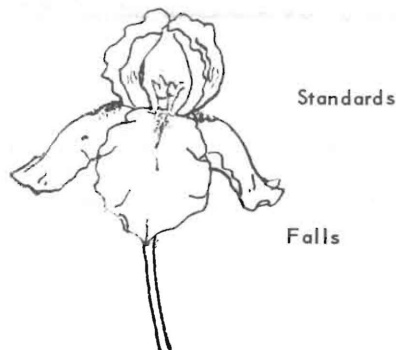


Fig. 1. Iris Flower Parts

FLOWERS - Iris have orchid-like flowers. Nine to 12 buds are usually found growing on short side branches on each stem. Each blossom lasts about two days.

Each flower has six petals. Three of these are upright and are called standards. The other three petals are hanging and are known as falls. Iris may have standards and falls of the same color or standards may be one color and falls a different color. Principal iris colors are lavender-blue, white, purple, rose-red, yellow, pink, brown or various combinations and blends or combinations of these colors.

CULTURE - The requirements of all classes of bearded iris are reasonably simple. The two major requirements are sun and good drainage. The plants grow well in almost any good garden soil, but they are less susceptible to disease, such as root rot, in soils of only moderate fertility. Extremely rich soils tend to produce soft growth. This increases problems with root rot, the worst enemy of iris.

Iris should not be crowded by other plants that overshadow or mat closely about roots and foliage. Keep your iris free of weeds by practicing clean, shallow cultivation. Free air movement in and about iris plants is the best insurance against foliage diseases.

WHERE TO PLANT - Bearded iris are well adapted to garden planting, borders and flower beds in sunny sites. Where heavy, poorly drained soils are a problem, beds can be raised slightly above paths or sod areas to provide the necessary drainage.

Prepare beds a week to ten days before planting to allow the soil time enough to settle. Deep

spading assures an ideal planting bed for iris. The soil can be enriched with superphosphate or 4-12-4 fertilizer. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS ON THE PACKAGE.

The use of barnyard manure on iris should be discouraged. Well rotted manure can be used when it is carefully worked into the soil, but surface applications are not advisable.

WHEN AND HOW TO PLANT - Bearded iris can be divided or planted most any time, but late July or August is the ideal time to plant iris in North Dakota. They may be planted in clumps by themselves. They are also effective in foundation plantings.

DIVISION OF OLD CLUMPS - Bearded iris and many of the beardless types grow from a peculiar form of root known as a rhizome. This is really a fleshy underground stalk (stem) from which extend the true, stringy roots. These rhizomes branch and in time overgrow and crowd each other so that it is necessary to dig and divide clumps every 3-4 years under ordinary culture.

The division should be reduced to a single section of the rhizome with a single fan of leaves. Always discard weak or diseased parts.

Set the division in a shallow hole large enough to accommodate the division and the attached fibrous roots. Cover the top of the rhizome with approximately 1 inch of soil. Firm the soil well. Cut the tops back to 6 inches at planting time.

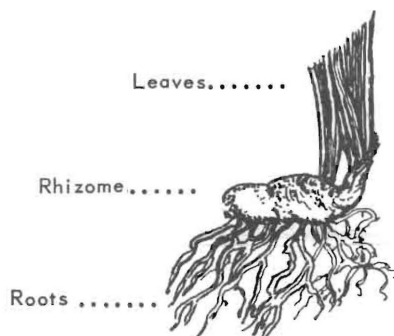


Fig. 2 Ready for Planting

Plant four to six single divisions 8 inches apart to form a clump. Clumps should not be

closer than 2 feet apart. If set closer, plants will become crowded quicker and have to be reset more often.

Clumps should be separated every three years or more often for best results. Planting seed is not practical for the amateur. Iris do not come true from seed!

HARDINESS - Iris are generally hardy in North Dakota. They will not, however, stand being under water for any length of time. Iris should be covered with some sort of mulch during the winter. Clean rye straw or marsh hay is good. Mulch is especially necessary if iris are planted in an exposed location and not protected by a blanket of snow.

VARIETIES - As with many other ornamentals, there are hundreds of varieties of iris. Since hardiness is important in North Dakota, this list contains some of the proved hardy varieties. They are, for the most part, reasonable in price.

WHITE - Cliffs of Dover, Tranquility.

CREAM - Desert Song, Sunny Ruffles.

YELLOW - Cloth of Gold, Solveg, Golden Sunshine.

DEEP YELLOW - Ola Kala.

PINK - Cherry Flip, Pink Formal, Pink Plume, Pink Clover.

LAVENDER TO VIOLET - Violet Harmony, Orchid Ruffles.

LIGHT BLUE - Jane Phillips, Blue Sapphire, Sky Dye, Lady Ilse.

MEDIUM BLUE - Blue Opal.

DEEP BLUE - Allegiance, Pacific Panorama.

PURPLE - Deep Black, Black Taffeta.

REDS - Dress Rehearsal, Bang.

BICOLORS - (light standards, dark falls) Pretender, Rubaiyat, Toll Gate.

PLICATA - (dotted on light ground) Blue Shimmer, Dotted Swiss, My Honeycomb.

PURPLE PLICATA - Minnie Colquitt.

VARIGATA - (yellow standards, dark falls) Mexico.

BRONZE - Cordowan, Ginger, Gracie Pfost.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Johnson, West Fargo, have made helpful suggestions in the preparation of this circular.
