

ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE

Environmental Horticulture #EH410



IRIS

PRODUCTION AND CONSUMER CARE

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INTRODUCTION

- Common name: Iris
- Scientific name: *Iris sp.*
- Name derives from the Greek word for 'rainbow'
- Native to a wide variety of habitats around the globe
- Perennial herb growing from rhizomes or bulbs
- Most species have 3-10 narrow basal leaves growing in thick clumps
- Large flowers bloom at the tips of sturdy stems growing 2-4' in height
- Flowers may be single or double and range from white to pink to blue to purple

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Prefers full sun but will tolerate partial shade
- Should be watered adequately so that soil never dries out
- Prefers acidic media rich with organic matter
- Should be fertilized twice, once in spring and again in summer just before plants begin to bloom
- Use a 2-3'' layer of mulch to retain moisture and provide winter protection

PROPAGATION

- Best propagated by division 2-3 weeks after completion of blooming
- Divide root clumps into smaller chunks of 4-6 rhizomes each
- Plant rhizomes in a small indentation about 2'' deep; barely cover with media
- Space plants 15-18'' apart

DISORDERS

- Bacterial soft rot (*Erwinia sp.*)
 - Soft, pulpy rhizomes with an unpleasant odor and withered leaf tips
 - Dig up infected rhizomes and discard badly infected portions
- Leaf spot (*Didymellina macrospora*)
 - Irregular grayish spots appear on leaves
 - Premature death of leaves weakens rhizomes
 - Remove affected foliage
- Rust (*Puccinia sp.*)
 - Causes rectangular brown leaf lesions
 - Remove and destroy infected plants
- Foliar nematode infection
 - Lesions bounded by major veins appear on leaves
 - Leaves turn brown and die
 - Remove and destroy infected plants
- Iris borers
 - Excavate feeding channels in leaves
 - Attack rhizomes in summer
 - When dividing, remove and destroy affected portions

CONSUMER CARE

- Grows well adjacent to a pond or pool
- Can be grown in containers at least 1' deep
- Excellent cut flower for use in arrangements
- Iris rhizomes are used in perfumes

CULTIVARS AND SPECIES

- *Iris pallida*
 - 'Variegata': lavender blue flowers, green leaves with cream margins
 - 'Variegata Alba': lavender blue flowers, green leaves with white margins
- *Iris siberica*
 - 'Butter and Sugar': butter-yellow flowers
 - 'Caesar's Brother': deep blue flowers
 - 'Pink Haze': lavender-pink flowers

References

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iris_\(plant\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iris_(plant))
<http://www.yardener.com/Iris.Japanese.html>
<http://www.thegardenhelper.com/iris.html>

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