



Bearded Iris (*Iris germanica*)

Jennifer Lee, UMN Extension Crow Wing County Master Gardener Volunteer

Bearded iris is a traditional herbaceous perennial from the Mediterranean region. Flower colors range from blues and purples to shades of pink, yellow, orange, white and black on stalks that can grow to 3' tall. It is a showy and fragrant flower used as a border accent plant or in fragrance gardens. A plant may produce one to several blooms with each flower comprised of three upright petals and three drooping petals. The fall has a fuzzy, beard-like growth at its base. The genus is named for the Greek goddess of the rainbow.

Type	Perennial
Hardiness Zone	3 - 10
Sun	Full sun (6 or more hours of direct sunlight per day), but will tolerate partial shade (2-6 hours of direct sunlight per day)
Bloom Time	May - June
Height	Dwarf: 3" - 11", Intermediate: 1' - 2', Tall: 2' - 4'
Spread	1' - 2'
Tolerance	Drought tolerant
Attracts	Birds, butterflies and hummingbirds
Additional Features	Deer resistant

Soil and Site Recommendations

- Drainage: well-drained soil, avoid mulch
- Soil pH: Neutral to slightly acidic conditions (pH 5.5 to 6.5 is best)
- Type: rich, well-drained soil

Planting Recommendations

- Type: bulb/rhizome
- When to plant: late July or August
- Depth of planting: Rhizomes should be at soil level or lightly covered (1/2" soil)
- Mulching: none
- Spacing: 12-24 inches
- Spread: Horizontal branching rhizomes spread just beneath the soil surface
- Division/transplant tips: divide rhizomes after flowering in mid-summer (July and August)

Maintenance

- Watering: regular watering during active growth - cool season
- Fertilization: early spring with low nitrogen fertilizer such as 5-10-10
- Pinching/deadheading: remove blooms after they fade; after a hard frost, cut foliage back and dispose of all debris.
- Annual maintenance: Clumps should be divided every 3-4 years for plant growth and vigor. While this can be done any time after blooming, it is best in late July or August. The younger rhizome should be planted as the older rhizome may not bloom again.

Common Problems

Diseases: crown rot and mosaic virus

Insects: iris borer – manage by removing and disposing of affected roots and foliage immediately and clearing bed at the end of the season

Resources

<http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/scene51d1.html>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/iris-x-germanica/>

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/bearded-iris/>

Questions or problems: “What’s wrong with my plant?”

<https://apps.extension.umn.edu/garden/diagnose/plant/annualperennial/iris/rhizomes.html>

Visit us at crowingmastergardeners.org, on Facebook @CWCMasterGardeners and on Instagram @cwcmastergardener.



Iris Pallida – Bearded Iris noted for striking foliage and showy purple flowers.



Siberian Iris - Shakers Prayer