

# *Iris* spp. - Iris (*Iridaceae*)

*Iris* is known as one of the most popular perennial bulbs or rhizomes. It is available in many types of floral color and varying bloom periods.

## FEATURES

### Form



- herbaceous perennial;
- upright foliage; types vary from 18-36" tall x 1' wide

### Culture

- plant rhizomes about 12" apart and 1" deep in Sept.-Oct. in well-drained, rich soil in full sun to partial shade
- most effective if grouped

together in clumps

- allow foliage to senesce before removal
- abundant availability; bulbs, rhizomes, or containers

### Foliage

- green to blue-green blades, swords, or fans of foliage with parallel leaf veins
- ranging from 6"-2' in height, arranged in a clump pattern
- autumn color green, yellowish green, or yellow

### Flowers

- solid colors of white, cream, violet, purple, or blue, often tinged with a second or third color
- complex floral structure of 3 erect/arching central "standards" and 3 drooping/recurved outer bearded "falls", with 1-3 flowers per stalk
- borne in May



### Fruits

- brown capsule; 2" long x 1" wide

### Twigs

- not applicable

### Trunk

- not applicable

## USAGE

### Function

- accent plant
- good for beds, borders, hillsides, raised planters, foundations, or group plantings

### Texture

- medium to bold

### Assets

- accent flowering plant for spring, visible from a distance
- often bold textured
- some types are weed and insect resistant
- some tolerate wet soils

### Liabilities

- wet-rot of rhizomes or bulbs in poorly drained sites for some species

### Habitat

- usually hardy to zone 5
- Native to the world, some U.S. natives are bog plants and will grow in standing water

## SELECTIONS

### Alternates

- other upright flowering perennials

### Variants

- many types exist chosen for flower color in most species

- Iris ensata* (*I. kaempferi*) - Japanese Iris - tolerant of poor drainage, flowers in early summer, flowers are the largest of the Irises and are 4-8" diameter

- Iris germanica* - German Iris - popular large-flowered type subject to weed invasion; insects are a problem in this species, intolerant of poor drainage, showy flowers

- Iris sibirica* - lowest maintenance in an upland site, flowers are blue, purple, red-violet, or white, not as showy as the German Iris

- Iris versicolor* - Blue Flag - a native American Iris, a true bog plant that is showy on a pond edge or in boggy soil, flowers are blue