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## Iris Care

Bearded Iris (*Iris germanica*) Are one of the easiest perennials to grow. They will survive with little care and reward you with gorgeous, sweet smelling flowers in late spring and early summer. The upright foliage will provide your garden with a vertical accent all season long.

### Culture

Iris thrive in full sun and prefer well-drained soils. Heavy clay soils should be amended by peat moss or coconut coir and compost to improve drainage. Iris are water-smart perennials and need only occasional irrigation during the summer months. A high phosphorus-low nitrogen fertilizer may be used in the spring on established plants.

### Planting

Container grown Iris may be planted at any time during the growing season. Take care to plant them so the top of the rhizome is slightly exposed.

### Dividing

Late Summer is an excellent time to rejuvenate those established, over-crowded Iris. Clumps usually require division every 3-4 years to maintain flowering vigor and strength. Dig up clumps and separate into individual rhizomes. Discard soft or dried rhizomes, selecting firm rhizomes with fresh roots for replanting.

Replant following the previously outlined procedures. Rhizomes should face outside when planting in groups to prevent the clump from overcrowding too rapidly. Divisions may take a few seasons to establish before blooming.

### Insects and Diseases

Bearded Iris are susceptible to crown rot and iris bore. Crown rot can occur if the soil is too moist, causing rhizomes to soften and shrivel. A fungicide can be applied to prevent crown rot, but once the rhizome is soft, cut out the soft infected parts and destroy them. Sterilize the knife between cuts in order to prevent the spread of disease.

Iris bore is an insect which travels between the layers of the leaves and into the rhizome. Signs are trailing lines in the foliage and holes in the rhizome. Crown rot can also enter the plant at this time. Spraying the plant with an insecticide can control the bore, but if crown rot has also occurred, destroy the infected plants.