



Photo: Martha Gioumouis

Common Names:
Flag Iris, German Iris,
Bearded Iris

Plant Type: Perennial

Light Requirements: Full Sun

Height: highly variable (8 - 48 inches)

Bloom Time: Summer

Hardiness Zones: 3-9

Iris

Iris is an herbaceous perennial in the Iris family (Iridaceae). Its precise origin is not known, but it is thought to originate from the Mediterranean region. Iris have been cultivated widely and there are thousands of different varieties available today. They add a unique texture to the landscape, with their wide, strap-like foliage and unique blooms. They are available in a huge variety of colors and heights. The iris pictured above are considered German, or bearded iris (*Iris x germanica*).

Bearded iris grow and spread by means of underground stems called rhizomes. They thrive in full sun conditions and are highly tolerant of dry soils and drought. Bearded iris actually prefer drier conditions; they can easily rot in areas that are too wet or not well drained. Due to this, it's advised to avoid mulching the rhizomes and take care not to overwater. Proper spacing will also encourage good air circulation and discourage disease.

Over time, iris plants may become crowded, which will result in reduced flowering. Iris should be divided every three to five years. Iris are deer, rabbit, and groundhog resistant. Iris have relatively few diseases, though leaf (oval shaped spots on the leaves) and iris borer (an insect that can attack iris plants) are two issues to watch out for. Regular division and inspection of iris leaves and rhizomes should keep the problem in check.

References:

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

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

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/iris>