

## **Siberian Iris (SIB)**

Siberian irises are probably the easiest iris to grow. They are hardy and grow in a wide variety of conditions. They range in height from 8 inches to 4 feet and come in many different colors and patterns. Siberian irises start blooming at the end of the Tall Bearded iris season and continue until after the Japanese iris season begins. They are a great addition to your perennial garden.

**Soil conditions:** Siberian irises prefer acidic soil, but they adapt well to most soil conditions. You can add organic compost or peat moss to your soil to make it more acidic.

**Water:** Siberian irises like year-round moisture, but not soggy conditions. They should be kept moist all spring until the end of bloom season.

**Sun:** Siberian irises perform best in full sun, but can tolerate some shade.

**Fertilizer:** Siberian irises prefer a rich, humus soil. Mulching 1 to 2 inches with organic compost each year helps. If you prefer, liberally apply a balanced fertilizer, such as 12-12-12, in the early spring and just after bloom.

**Dividing:** Siberian irises do not need to be divided, but you may want to anyway. After a few years, they will form very large clumps that can become hard to manage. The best time to divide is fall, but it can also be done in the spring. Dig around the root ball and lift the plant out of the ground. Break the plant down to divisions of 3 to 5 fans, and trim off all the dead roots (live roots are white). Keep the roots wet until you are ready to re-plant.

**Planting:** Soak the roots of new plants overnight prior to planting. Plant the rhizome 2 to 3 inches deep and about 18 to 24 inches apart. Keep divisions well watered after planting until established. Adding a layer of mulch will help retain moisture and keep the weeds down.

When the foliage dies back in the fall, it should be cut off close to the ground and removed from the garden. Siberian irises need 2 to 3 years to become fully established; the first year's bloom is not representative.