



Growing Siberian Irises Care and Culture

Siberian irises are among the easiest irises to grow. They are hardy and grow under a wide variety of conditions. They range in height from 8 inches to 4 feet and come in many different colors and patterns. They are a great addition to your perennial garden.

Note: These directions are specific to the 28-chromosome “Garden” Siberian irises. For cultural requirements -for 40 chromosome “Sino-Siberian” irises, check out our Growing Sino-Siberian Irises sheet.

Hardiness Zone: 3 – 9

Bloom Season: Siberian irises bloom after the Pacific Coast irises and before the Spuria irises—late May and into June in our garden

Soil conditions: Siberian irises prefer acidic soil, but they adapt well to most soil conditions. 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 will perform at their best if they receive regular watering from early spring until the end of bloom season.

Sun: In the Pacific Northwest, Siberian irises prefer full sun, with a minimum of 6 hours per day. In the Midwest or Southern states, you may need to give them afternoon shade to protect them from excess heat.

Fertilizer: Siberian irises prefer a rich, humus soil. Mulching with 1 to 2 inches of organic compost each year helps. If you prefer, liberally apply a balanced fertilizer in the early spring and again just after bloom. I use 10-10-10 (but honestly, whatever is cheapest at your local garden center will do!)

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 1 to 3 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. Add a layer of mulch (I use compost, but tree leaves or fir needles work, too) to help retain moisture and keep the weeds down.

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

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