



Growing Spuria Irises Care and Culture

Spuria irises are a much-undervalued member of the genus *Iris*. For the most part, they are tall plants with beautiful flowers that are easy to grow. Hummingbirds adore them. Bees love them. They make great cut flowers for arrangements. Spurias are a worthy addition to any garden.

Hardiness Zone: 4 – 9

Bloom Season: Spuria irises bloom after Tall Bearded irises and before Japanese irises – mid-June in our garden.

Soil conditions: Spuria irises prefer a slightly alkaline soil. However, our soil is acidic, and they thrive in it. They do like a rich soil, so do not be afraid to add compost or alfalfa pellets. Spuria irises do not tolerate standing water, so the soil needs to drain well.



Water: Spuria irises require regular water October through the bloom season. You can allow them to dry out during the summer. This will cause them to go dormant. Intermittent summer water, standing water, or too much summer moisture can cause rot, fungus, and/or virus. If you allow them to go dormant, do not resume watering until fall.

Sun: Spuria irises prefer full sun, with a minimum of 6 hours each day. If grown in too much shade, they may not bloom.

Fertilizer: Composted manure is the best fertilizer for Spurias. A yearly mulch goes a long way to having healthy plants. If you prefer, you can use a balanced fertilizer (I use 10-10-10) in the early spring and again in the fall once new growth starts to appear.

Dividing: Spuria irises do not need dividing. However, if left alone for a number of years, they will form very large clumps. If you choose to divide, the best time is in the fall after new growth starts.

Planting: After you have prepared the soil, dig a hole twice the size of the rhizome and about 4 inches deep. Sprinkle a small amount of balanced fertilizer (I prefer 10-10-10) into the hole and add 2 inches of soil back in. Place the rhizome in the hole and cover with the rest of the soil. Keep well-watered until established. A good layer of mulch will help keep them evenly moist. I use compost, but sawdust works as well. Plant each Spuria about 3 feet apart. Most will grow into large clumps, and you will want to provide adequate space.

If you allow your Spurias to go dormant, the foliage will become unsightly. After the foliage starts to turn, feel free to cut the foliage to the ground. If you are growing one of the smaller Spuria species (*I. kerneriana*, *I. graminea*, *I. sintenisii*, etc.), this will not be necessary since their foliage stays green all summer.

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