

BEARDLESS IRIS CULTURE FOR SIBERIAN IRISES

Plant directly in the new location if you and your weather will be able to keep the soil wet continuously until established. Most irises will grow and bloom better if planted in a sunny location. Siberian irises prefer a rich soil with ample organic matter. If the soil is clay, the addition of organic matter will help to loosen it. If the soil is more sandy, the organic matter will help in water and nutrient retention. The soil should be slightly acid (pH 5.5 to 6.5 is good). If your soil pH is too high, it can be lowered by the addition of granular ferrous sulphate or agricultural sulphur.

Plant these irises in a naturally moist area, or in an area where you can water the new plants until they become established. Planting in a small depression (1 to 3 inches below the average soil level) will help the plant receive extra water during rains or when watered. The roots should at no time be allowed to dry out during transplanting. Do the planting in the cool of the evening if possible. If the weather is very hot, it might help to shade new transplants in some way, maybe with a webbed lawn chair.

Siberian irises are moderate feeders. A liberal application of a balanced fertilizer, such as 10-10-10, in spring and just after bloom is beneficial.

After planting, mulch at 1 to 3 inches. Oat straw, pine needles, rotted sawdust or wood chips are recommended. The mulch helps conserve moisture as well as reduce weeds. Do not mulch with peat moss or grass clippings as both can pack down and become impervious to water.

Once established and mulched, most Siberians can get along with as little water as bearded irises, and are able to withstand droughts with minimal supplemental water. More water, however, is fine too.

After bloom is complete, cut off the stalks near the ground on a dry day. Some people find leaving the stalks in place a while to be attractive; if you do this, be sure to remove the pods before the seeds drop and produce seedlings that are not quite true to the variety you planted.