

## HOW TO GROW IRIS



Iris are one of the easiest perennials to grow. They reward you with gorgeous blooms with a minimum of attention. Here are a few simple suggestions to help you care for and enjoy these elegant flowers.

### WHERE TO PLANT

The ideal location for your iris is a sunny, well drained site (minimum of half a day of sunshine). Water should not stand in your iris beds, so raise the level above your garden paths if necessary.

### WHEN TO PLANT

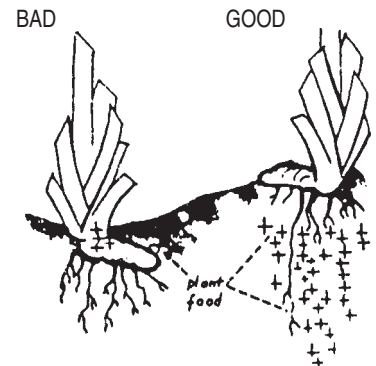
For best results plant in July through September. Early planting establishes the new iris plants before winter. This is also the time to reset clumps that are crowded.

### SOIL PREPARATION

Work your soil well, loosening it deep enough to promote good root development. If your soil is heavy, incorporate sand for better drainage. The soil should not be acid. If it is, apply lime, other wise no lime is recommended.

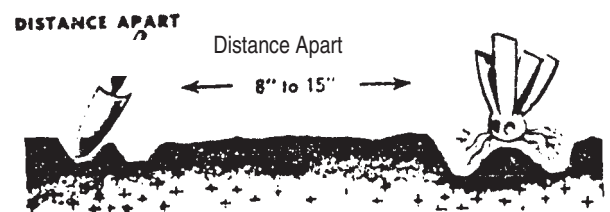
### DEPTH TO PLANT

Place your rhizomes just below the surface of the ground with the roots spread out underneath. This places the rhizome within reach of the warmth of the sun's rays while the roots beneath are in moist (not soggy) soil. It is important not to plant too deep. Firm the soil tightly around each rhizome when planting.



### DISTANCE APART

Generally iris are planted from 8 inches to 2 feet apart. Closer planting will give an immediate massed effect, but will also become overcrowded sooner and need to be thinned every two years. Plants set 2 feet or more apart will only need to be divided every third or fourth year.



## FERTILIZATION

Healthy garden soil will grow fine iris. Mix **Cotton Boll Compost** into the soil when preparing your new bed. In early spring or very late fall apply **Dutch Bulb Food** (7-8-5) as a side dressing, dusted around and in between the plants, not directly on the rhizomes. Excessive nitrogen will promote soft, lush growth which is more susceptible to rot.

## WATERING

Newly set plants should be kept moist until the roots are growing well. Established plants rarely need watering except during prolonged dry spells; at such times, deep, infrequent watering is best.

## THIN OLD CLUMPS

August-September divide large clumps for replanting. Use a sharp knife to trim each rhizome and scissors to clip the roots and leaves. Wash plants well, then spread them out to dry. Replant with **ferti•lome Root Stimulator** to get the iris off to a good start.

## GENERAL CARE

During the growing season, the plants may be sprayed along with roses and other perennials with a combination insecticide-fungicide spray at regular intervals - usually 10 days to 2 weeks. We recommend **ferti•lome Rose Spray** or **Triple Action**.

In some years - usually warm, wet ones - leaf spot can make leaves unsightly. Cutting off the spotted leaves will improve the appearance and retard the spread of the disease.

Cultivate shallowly, since the feeder roots are near the surface. Air circulation and sanitation are the best problem preventatives. Remove outer leaves as they become brown. Keep old leaves, grasses and other debris from around the base of the plant

Old bloom stalks should be broken off at ground level. Healthy, green foliage should NOT be cut off. The foliage should be left on the rhizomes to foster development of the new sprouts for the next season.

Mulching of iris is to be avoided. If you want to mulch for the appearance and to retain moisture, do NOT cover the rhizomes. They need the sun to develop next year's increase. Freezing weather will not harm the rhizomes other than causing slight "heaving" out of the ground. In such a situation, simply lightly cover any exposed roots with additional soil. Remove mulch early (March) before active growth begins.