

CARE OF YOUR IRISES

FERTILIZATION

Before you plant, you may work in fertilizer. We recommend Pro-Gro organic fertilizer. Be careful not to use something high in nitrogen, which makes plants susceptible to rot and will produce lots of growth, but few blooms.

PLANTING

Some people like to dip the rhizomes in a solution of 10% bleach and 90% water. Rinse in plain water after dipping. This will kill off bacteria that might cause soft rot.

- Don't plant the rhizome too deep. Just barely cover the top of the rhizome with dirt. Spread the roots out, firm the dirt around them, and water well. Plant rhizomes about 10"-18" apart.
- Plant in full sun, or in at least 6 or more hours of sun. Bearded irises don't like "wet feet", so provide a well-drained site, in raised beds, if necessary.
- Plant your new rhizomes as soon as possible. The sooner you get them back in the ground, the more likely they will bloom next year.

DIVIDING

About every four years, dig and divide the irises, discarding the old plants, and keeping just new, healthy, husky rhizomes. Early July is a good time to divide, as the baby rhizomes will have sized up nicely. Trim the fans in half, and replant, as above.

BORERS

If you grow irises in the Midwest, you will have borers, sooner or later. The chemical (Cygon) that we used to use to kill borers was quite toxic, and it has been taken off the market. There are a few products available to kill borers. We are recommending the systemic product Bayer Tree & Shrub Protect and Feed. We sell it in a 3 lb granular size. The active ingredient you should be looking for is MERIT (Imadicloprid). Sprinkle the granules in April, when the fans are 4"-6" tall.

SOFT ROT

In the spring, check for soft rot by pressing on the tops of the rhizomes. Scrape out any mushy areas with a spoon and expose the wound to the air. You could also pour a little 10% bleach solution on the wound. Clean off your spoon often with diluted bleach.

BROWN SPOT

Brown spot won't kill the rhizome, but can destroy the foliage. Spraying periodically with a broad-spectrum fungicide, especially during humid weather, will keep your foliage looking good.

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