

Iris Culture

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History on Irises

- Iris date back to 16th century B.C when introduced to Egypt from Syria and stylized versions of the flower began to decorate the scepters of pharaohs as representations of victory and power.
- In ancient Greek times the Goddess Iris was the messenger of the Gods. The name comes from the Greek word for rainbow.
- In Biblical times the meaning behind the Iris was a message of promise and hope.
- The iris inspired the Fleur-de Lis decorative symbol used by French royalty, which originated in the Middle Ages.
- Use of the iris as a garden plant dates back to 1469 B.C. in Egypt.
- The iris was introduced to North America by European immigrants, by the 1900's the name was loosely known as Flags or German Iris- Iris Germanica.

History in the U.S.

- In 1920 The American Iris Society was founded. They support the preservation of old iris and the hybridization of new iris.
- The Historical Iris Preservation Society is a branch of AIS
- AIS puts out a quarterly bulletin on iris culture, the newest developments and activities
- The yearly Spring Iris Shows and judging held by clubs across the country by city, to region to national are affiliated with AIS

Awards presented for new introductions by hybridizers annually are- Honorable Mention, Award of Merit, Wister Medal, Dykes Medal

- It can take an iris introduction 5 or 6 years to climb the ladder to a top award if it merits the recognition

Iris Society

- Locally the Iris Society of Austin is in AIS Region 17
- They meet the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Zilker Botanical Garden. Their Facebook page is Iris Austin where they post meeting bulletins events, photos etc.
- E-mail is irisaustin@hotmail.com

Types of Irises

- The most popular is the Tall Bearded Iris TB for short
 - Tall Bearded – TB 27.5” or more
- Intermediate Bearded- IB 16-27”
- Boarder Bearded- BB 16-27”
- Miniature Tall Bearded- MTB 16-25”
- Standard Dwarf Bearded- SDB 8-15”
- Miniature Dwarf Bearded- MDB less than 8 inches tall
- Arils and Aril bredes

Information

- With each different type there is a staggered bloom season, starting with the smallest, a difference in bud count, branching, and flower size.
- There is novelty iris called Space Age where the beard has been hybridized into a raised horn or a spoon shape.
- Historic Iris, 30 years or older are typically slimmer in petal size, the newer hybrids have larger petals with ruffled, or lace edges.
- Genetic color categories are used in judging, a Self is all one uniform color
 - Plicata has stitched or stippled margin of color on white background
 - Luminata has a top or standards of white or yellow with veining on the falls
 - Neglecta is a blue or violet bi-tone
 - Verigata has yellow or near yellow standards with deeper falls of varied or solid tone brown or purple.

Care of Irises

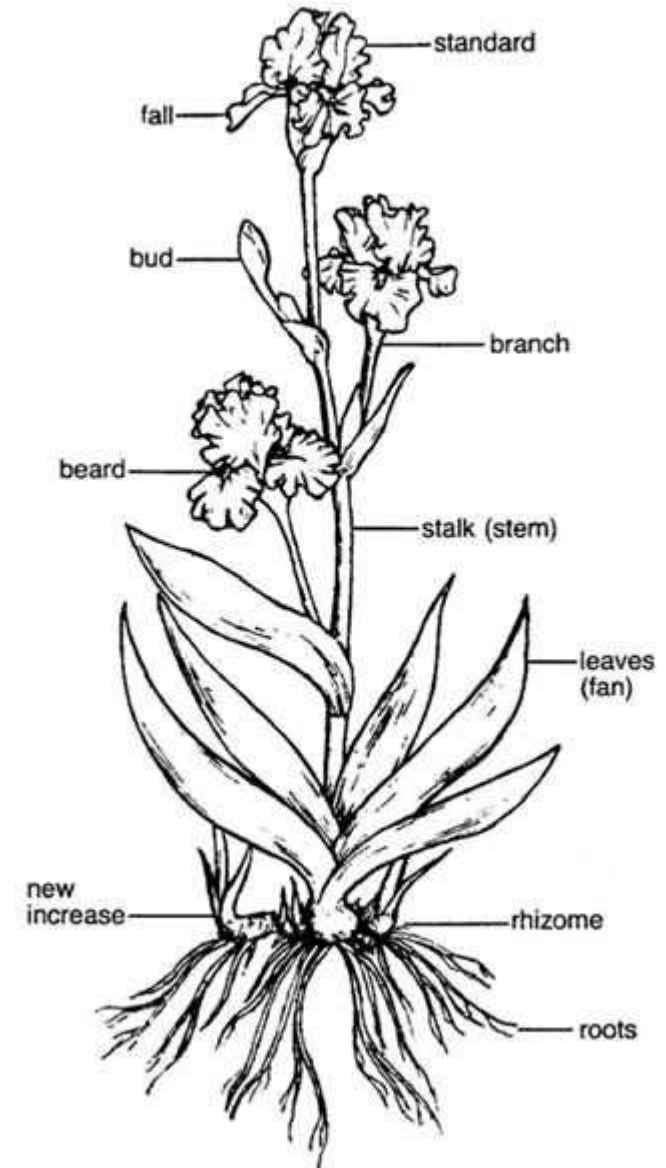
- Occasionally an iris will be classified as a re-bloomer, it may bloom in Spring and again later in the year, usually Fall.
- Iris are sun lovers needing at least 6 hours of sunlight a day. They should be planted in amended soil with good drainage, deep watered once a week and allowed to dry
 - They are drought tolerant
- Fertilize with a good Rose and Flower food (the 1st number being 10 or lower)
- Don't use miracle grow.

Parts of Iris

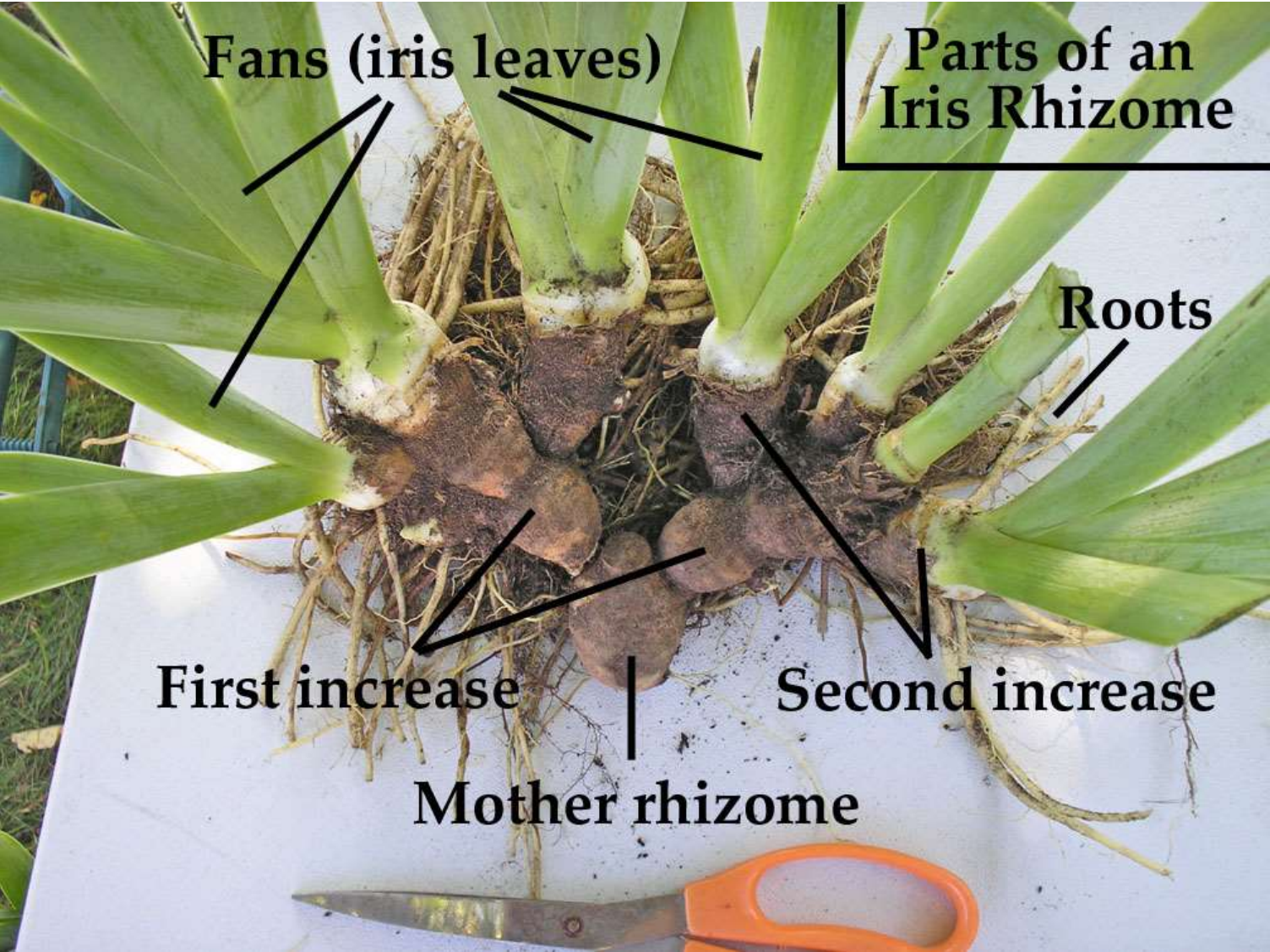
Starting at the bottom...

- Roots
- Rhizome
- New growth (increases)
- Leaves or Fan
- Stem
- Branch
- Buds
- Falls
- Standards
- Beard
- Style arms

A Bearded Iris Plant



How to Divide an Iris



Moving My Iris To Texas

- I was a member of the Fresno Iris Society in Central California for the past 5 years, participating in meetings, fund raisers, set-up for the annual rhizome sale and the annual Iris show.
- When I announced I'd be moving out of state and wanted to take my iris with me I asked advice from the other club members...could it be done? I would be digging them up in April, not an ideal time of year to interrupt the iris growth season.
- The president of FIS organized some club members to come over and dig, divide, clean, sterilize, trim and label all 90 plus named iris in my garden. I kept 2 or 3 of each to bring with me and donated the rest to the club to be potted for their fund-raising activities.

Moving My Iris To Texas (cont.)

- When we arrived in the Austin area and started house hunting it soon became obvious that my irises weren't going to be planted in a timely fashion. We wound up buying a new build that won't be ready until December.
- So, I started thinking about potting my iris rhizomes and found The Lost Pines Garden club, I contacted Norm and he enthusiastically asked about my iris and contacted Peggy who had plenty of pots to spare. I'm so grateful to them. I asked the manager of our RV park if I could put the pots behind our trailer and she gave her permission.
- I bought bags of container soil and started soaking the rhizomes a few at a time to rehydrate them, then potted and inserted the label for each. I had a little help with this process from 2 little girls in the RV park.

Moving My Iris To Texas (cont.)

- Most of the rhizomes started out with very dried up leaves, no green left after 3 months of being in a box. Those in the top half of the box looked more viable, those at the bottom looked very sad.
- I wound up planting 103 pots and have gradually pulled off the dead material. I'm seeing green sprouts where increases are starting.
- I'm hopeful that a few may actually bloom next Spring.

Status



Winning Entries

Iris Show in Fresno CA 2019



Iris Pictures from My Garden



Rocket Randy



Thornbird

Iris Pictures from My Garden (cont.)



Historic Iris



First Prize

Iris Pictures from My Garden (cont.)



Isadora Belle

Link Example

- Here is a link [American Iris Society \(irises.org\) www.irises.org](http://www.irises.org)