

# Wenke Wisdom

## Siberian Iris

Siberian Iris are a hardy beardless iris growing from two to four feet in height. They bloom at the end of the tall bearded iris season. The flowers are beautiful cut and are well suited for arrangements. The slender grass-like foliage forms dense clumps. The beauty of their blooms and the grace of their foliage enhance perennial and shrub borders. In naturalized settings they are particularly effective around water.

Culture: Plant deeper than other iris, covering rhizomes with one to two inches of soil. Plants should be spaced two feet apart. Siberians like an acid soil, from 5.5 to 6.9 on the pH scale. The soil may be enhanced with peat moss, compost or other humus. Siberians perform best in locations providing full sun, although they can tolerate less. In extremely hot climates some shade protection is needed. Good drainage is critical. Siberians like year round moisture but not soggy conditions. Newly planted rhizomes should never be allowed to dry out. Plants should be kept moist during the spring. A light fertilization in the spring and again after bloom time encourages plants with larger flowers. A mulch is recommended for the first winter to prevent damage from heaving. When the foliage dies back in the fall, it should be cut off close to the ground and be removed from the garden. Siberians need two to three years to become established; the first year's bloom is unrepresentative.