

**Bearded Iris:** Now is the perfect time to plant Bearded Iris in the foothills. Planting time is July –October, but September – October in our hotter areas. These amazing beauties can be spotted in spring in the most unusual areas, often in abandoned old home sites or by the side of the road. Needless to say they are one tough plant that requires little care. Right now they are widely available and come in the most stunning colors. They are a must for every garden.

**Size:** 15” – 28” but depends on variety.

**Exposure:** Full sun, partial shade.

**How to Plant:** Plant rhizomes 1’ – 2’ apart. Point the leaf growing end in the direction you want the plant to grow. Plant rhizomes parallel with the ground, and only cover partially with soil and water. The rhizome should be barely beneath the soil.

**Fertilize:** Regularly during the growing season with a moderate nitrogen fertilizer.

**Propagation:** Divided ever 3 -4 years. This is best done during planting time. Lift and divide rhizomes, cut leaves and roots down to 6”. Let them heal (sit and dry) for at least a day before replanting.

**Water needs:** Do not over water the rhizomes. Supplemental water during the growing season if there is no rain.

**Soil:** Bearded Iris requires good drainage so the rhizomes don’t rot. They will grow in almost any soil. If you have clay soil plant on slopes, or build ridges for the rhizome to sit on.

**Snapshot:** Typically Bearded Iris bloom in spring and have long sword like leaves. The plant sizes range from dwarf, 8”, to tall, 2 ½ - 4” tall. Typically we see the tall variety. They grow from a rhizome, which is a root stem that grows either along the top or underneath the soil, producing roots. The Bearded Iris has 6 petals. 3 up-right (standards), 3 down (falls) that sit atop a long stem that sprouts from the leaves. Each fall will have a caterpillar like tuft (beard). The colors range from any combination of purples, yellows, whites, pinks, and bronze blue, not to mention all standards and fall variations.

**Novella Springer**  
**Calaveras Master Gardener**  
**San Andreas**

Bearded Irises are the most popular and can be identified by a tuft of hairs (beard) on the lower petal. The crested version is characterized by a small narrow ridge at the base of the lower petals. Beardless Irises vary in size and shape but all clearly lack a “beard”. Contrary to most Irises the Aril does not require summer watering or perfect drainage. The blooms are huge and domed in lavender, grey, maroon and gold with subtle veins or stipples.