

What is best way to care for bearded iris?



Gardening
Carol Savonen
Guest columnist

Question: I have mature bearded, Siberian and Japanese irises in the garden at the older house we bought this year. These have all finished blooming. How do I best care for them now through the summer?

Answer: Bearded iris are the largest in size. You should be able to see the tops of the rhizomes (underground fleshy stem) all summer, so do not mulch, or these will rot. Cut the spent blossoms off close to the base of the flowering stem after all buds have bloomed. Leave all the healthy leaves on to photosynthesize and feed the rhizome for next year. Remove diseased or insect infested leaves. If you want to divide your iris to thin an overcrowded patch or transplant, do so in the late summer. In the fall, trim the leaves to about six inches tall. Be sure to weed and keep grass out of your bearded iris patch. You can mulch lightly in the winter with leaves or bark.

Beardless irises include the Siberian and Dutch irises, which grow from rhi-

zomes and the Dutch iris, which grows from a bulb. Our native iris here in the Pacific Northwest are beardless as well and can interbreed with the Siberians.

Siberian iris - Divide in late summer and fall if your patch is several years old and getting sparse in the center. Can get by with deep watering once per week. Little other maintenance needed. Does best in slightly acidic soil that is seasonally wet. A thin cover of mulch is good. Resents transplanting and may take a few years to spread and set a lot more stems. Deadheading is not necessary for plant health.

Japanese iris - These have bigger, showier flowers than the Siberians. Divide in late summer and fall if your patch is several years old and getting sparse in the center. Does best in more acidic and richer soil than bearded or even Siberian irises. Do not fertilize with lime or bone meal. Likes seasonally wet soil and regular moisture all summer. Mulch with 2 to 4 inches of mulch to help maintain dampness. Cut back after frost and transplant about every three years, as the rhizomes tend to heave out of the soil over time.

Oregon has an invasive species of iris—a gorgeous, large yellow species of iris called "yellow flag" or "yellow water iris" (Iris pseudacorus). Sold in local

nurseries and garden stores, these Old World iris have escaped into wetlands, along riverbanks and near ponds all over the state. I've seen large patches while paddling the Marys River, which flows through my backyard.

The big problem with this lovely perennial iris: It is invasive and out-competes native riparian vegetation, including cattails, sedges and rushes, and it degrades native fish habitat, as well as bird nesting and rearing sites. To learn more and see what it looks like, see <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/article/172630>

Want to plant new iris? Here are some pointers:

■ Plant irises July through September in a place with at least half a day of direct sun. They all like well-drained soil. Plant bearded iris shallowly, so you can still see the rhizome.

■ Avoid planting yellow flag if you live near water or have a water feature.

■ Consider bulb irises as well. These are the Dutch iris, that bloom earlier in the spring than the other types.

For more information on iris varieties and care, these local websites are helpful:

■ Portland Nursery: <https://portlandnursery.com/perennials/iris/>

■ Schreiner's Iris Gardens: [https://](https://www.schreinersgardens.com/how-to-grow-and-care-for-iris)



Siberian Iris is a moisture-loving perennial. PHOTO COURTESY OF ROB ZIMMER

www.schreinersgardens.com/how-to-grow-and-care-for-iris

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IN BRIEF

'Golden Harp that Saved Silverton' showing

Brush Creek Playhouse is now presenting "The Golden Harp that Saved Silverton." Written, starring and directed by Norman Gouveia, the play runs Friday, June 22 thru Sunday, July 8. Performances will be at 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and at 2 p.m. Sundays. Brush Creek Playhouse is located at 11535 Silverton Road. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for children, students and seniors. They're available at Books-N-Time at 210 N. Water St or at the door 30 minutes before each performance. Contact Michael Wood, 503-508-3682 for more information.

Silverton Farmers Market is on Saturdays

At Silverton Farmers Market, buyers

will find quality produce, flowers, berries, eggs, meats, breads and pastries, plants and nursery stock, honey, jams and jellies, and garden-related art. The market is every Saturday, through October 13, in Town Square Park, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Beer passport fundraiser to benefit Habitat Purchase a House that Beer Built Passport for \$25 and get a pint of beer at more than two-dozen locations around the Valley, now through Aug. 31. All proceeds benefit North Willamette Valley Habitat for Humanity. Purchase your passport online at nwvhabitat.org/events/house-beer-built, select your pickup location (The Gallon House in Silverton, Backstop Bar & Grill in Canby or The Wild Hare Saloon in Oregon City) and start exploring the Hammer N' Ale Trail. For more information, go to nwvhabitat.org/events/house-beer-built or call 503-845-2177.

Mid-Valley ORCA grads from Marion for 2018

Special to Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Several hundred families, friends and classmates attended the 10th Oregon Connections Academy (ORCA) graduation ceremony earlier this month and students from Marion County are part of the Class of 2018. The tuition-free online school held an in-person commencement for its senior class on June 9 at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem.

ORCA Class of 2018 graduates from Marion County: Marijane Elkins Aumsville; LeeAnn Martin Aumsville; Yasmin Briseno-Oglevie Keizer; Alexander Goemaere Keizer; Morgan Kesler Keizer; Kaycee Asher Salem; Tasha Barnett Salem; Vanessa Cervantes Salem; Ian

Delgado Salem; Elissa Gasbarro Salem; Jaymes Hamilton Salem; Arjay Hamilton Salem; Emily Hatcher Salem; William Laursen Salem; Mackenzie McIlroy Salem; Marissa Miles Salem; Kristopher Mittig Salem; Jasmine Mong Salem; Judith Neevel Salem; Heidi Rosas Rosas Salem; Samantha Sargent Salem; Sara Schroeder Salem; Andrew Stark Salem; Heather Thompson Salem; Seryna Throne Salem; Kasha White Salem; Caitlin White Salem; Kaytlyn Zowie Salem; Margaret Buckholz Silverton; Evelyn Hoffman Silverton; Sterling Luthi Silverton; Alexis Niece Silverton; Riley Teeney Silverton; Yazmin Ramos Gomez Stayton; Austin VanHoose Enloe Stayton; Phillip Bhattacharjee Mill City; Sara Moore-Hamilton Mill City.



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