

Dwarf Iris Society Plant Sale—Buyer's Guide

Thank you for ordering from the Dwarf Iris Society plant sale! Your support of the sale helps the society carry out its mission and promote interest in the dwarf irises.

The grower of each collection you ordered will ship your plants to you in late July or early August.

We hope that the following guidance will answer any questions you may have about carrying for your new irises.

When Your Irises Arrive

Open the shipping carton immediately and remove the irises. Leave them indoors or outside in a cool, shaded location until you are ready to plant.

Planting

Although iris rhizomes are tough and can survive being out of the ground for a surprisingly long time, planting as soon as possible will help get them off to a strong start and reduce the risk of loss. This is especially true for dwarf irises, which have smaller rhizomes and wither more rapidly than their larger relatives. If you cannot plant within a week or two, it is best to plant the irises in pots temporarily.

Plant in a sunny location in good, well-drained garden soil. Working in organic matter prior to planting is helpful. Avoid locations that are especially prone to weeds or where other vigorous garden plants are likely to overrun the irises. Dwarf irises in particular suffer in the presence of aggressive neighbors.

Plant with the top of the rhizome near the soil surface. Growers in damp climates often prefer to leave the top of the rhizome slightly exposed, while those in hot, dry climates often favor a thin covering of soil. Iris rhizomes are not bulbs, and should never be planted more than 1 inch deep.

Water regularly to keep the soil lightly moist until the irises are rooted and new growth begins, signaled by the emergence of fresh new leaves from the center of the fan. Drying of outer leaves is normal.

Bearded irises, especially dwarfs, are also suitable for growing in containers. A mix of garden soil and commercial potting soil or container mix works well. The container needs sufficient volume and depth for the roots to spread out and grow down, 1 foot minimum for dwarfs, 2 feet or more for larger types.

Winter Care

Bearded irises, especially dwarfs, are cold hardy and do not need special protection over winter. Whatever care you give the rest of your garden should be suitable. If you live in a very cold climate, beware that dwarf irises are especially susceptible to heaving caused by alternate freezing and thawing. Some growers recommend placing a brick on top of the rhizome to help with this.

In the Spring

As weather warms and the irises begin to grow fresh new leaves, remove old dead foliage and clean up the bed of any debris. Some growers fertilize at this time (and again in early fall), although irises do not require synthetic fertilizer to bloom well in most soils. Many should bloom the first spring after planting, although some will wait another year.

Questions?

Feel free to contact the DIS plant sale team at plantsale@dwarfirissociety.org if you have additional questions of concerns. Thank you for supporting the Dwarf Iris Society!