

Horticulture Report – September 2020



The Tall and Beautiful Iris

The Iris is a beautiful flower that graces Seacoast gardens from the end of May until mid-June, an all too short period of time. The range of colors and shapes from the common variety to lovely large bearded type provides color and texture to the late Spring garden. However, even after the blooms have faded the fan like tall spikey leaves provide another dimension of form as well as light green sage color to the summer garden.

After Iris flowers have completely finished blooming it is important to cut off the tall stalks as close to the base as possible. If there are any dead, shriveled up, or yellow leaves they can be removed as well and the area around the rhizomes can be cleared of any debris and dead matter. During the late Spring as well as Summer you can divide your Iris bed by carefully digging up and moving them to other areas in your garden.

But it is during September and October that I usually care for, divide and move my Iris. The Iris is unusual in that it is very important to make sure the rhizome or foot of the Iris is kept above ground and only the long thin roots are planted under the soil. If the rhizome is buried your plant will not produce flowers.

When planting your Iris, first dig a wide hole about 1 to 2 inches deep. Then in the center of the hole build a mound for each set of rhizomes. The top of this mound should be level with the ground around the hole and have a “moat” around it for the roots to lay in. The rhizome should sit on top of the mound and the long thin roots should waterfall over the mound into the soil moat. Then cover the roots and only the roots with soil. After transplanting water your plant thoroughly.

In October before the frost sets in I always trim my Iris into a fan shape about 5 to 6 inches high. If these steps are taken your Iris will give you many years of pleasure.

