

REBLOOMING BEARDED IRIS – HORTICULTURE REPORT

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Reblooming Bearded Iris? Who knew?

Yes, one of the most beautiful and colorful of Spring flowers, the Bearded Iris, can grace your garden with a second bloom season in the Summer or Fall, or even throughout our New Hampshire Seacoast Zone 6 growing season.

Although some gardeners and garden centers refer to all Bearded Iris that rebloom as “rebloomers”, there are four distinct categories of “rebloomers”. Remontants (aka Rebloomers) produce two or more blooms per year; Cycle Rebloomers which will produce a crop in the Spring and another in the Fall; Repeaters will produce new flowers soon after the first Spring flowers die back; and All-season Rebloomers will produce flowers throughout the New England growing season.

Caring for your “rebloomers” is much the same as caring for your single bloom Iris. However, the rebloomers do require a bit more work mainly because they are more productive.

They need more frequent watering (every other week) so it is best to keep the reblooming variety separate from your traditional Iris so as not to rot out the rhizomes of the single blooming Iris.

Feed them in the Spring and again in the Fall using a low-nitrogen fertilizer with a small first number such as 5-10-20. A word of caution, don't allow the fertilizer granules to remain on the rhizomes as they may cause them to burn.

Because Bearded Iris that rebloom usually grow faster than your regular Iris you may have to divide them more frequently, perhaps every two or three years. When dividing, take only the new outer rhizomes leaving the older "Mother plant" intact. Then replant those new young rhizomes 12 to 18 inches apart.

Pruning your reblooming Iris is much the same as pruning regular Iris. After the first flowers fade, usually in June, cut off the flower stalk at the bottom; however, leave the foliage. In the Summer or Fall, depending on your variety, new stalks will appear with a second bloom of flowers. After the flowers fade cut those stalks to the ground. Some gardeners let the leaves remain until the Spring; however, I prefer to cut the leaves, on an angle, about six inches from the ground. It makes a neater appearance in the garden and may prevent disease. However, this last step is a personal preference.

Check with your local garden center to find out which variety of reblooming Bearded Iris will work best in your perennial garden.

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