

Iris Classification

The irises most often used as garden plants fall into three main groups:

Bearded Iris
Aril Iris
Beardless Iris

Each group has its unique qualities, and a collection including representatives from each group will be varied indeed.

Beardless Irises

Beardless Irises are mostly native to Asia. The first four types are commonly grown in gardens, and they all bloom after the TBs, extending the iris season even longer. The fifth type, the Pacific Coast Native, blooms before the TBs and is native to the western regions of the United States.

1. **Spurias (SPU)** are tall (2 to 5 feet in height) and elegant, and have very attractive foliage. The shape of the bloom often suggests orchids and the colors range from white and yellow through blue, wine and brown, often with bright yellow signals.



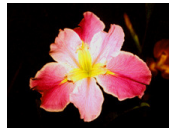
2. **Siberians (SIB)**, as their name suggests, need cold and wet conditions to perform well. The blooms are blue, violet, pink, yellow, and white with large falls and smaller standards. They are most attractive in established clumps and grow to a height of 2 to 4 feet.



3. **Japanese (JA)** require a slightly acid soil and present some of the most spectacular flowers of all the irises. Blooms are usually huge, ruffled and flat in form; some are marbled with gray or white. They bloom about a month after the TBs. Japanese hybridizers have worked with them for over 500 years.



4. **Louisianas (LA)** are native to the American Gulf Coast; they require soil that is somewhat acid and wet in the spring. The blooms are usually very wide petaled and open, showing brightly colored style-arms and sharp signal-crests.



5. **Pacific Coast Natives (PCN), or Californicae (CA)**, are not widely grown as they are intolerant of the climatic conditions of all but the far western area of the country. Where they can become established, they grow most attractively with graceful and dainty flowers held one to two feet high, in most colors and patterns.



6. **Species** often enhance gardens with their delicate beauty. *I. confusa* (Evansia) requires conditions similar to azaleas in a frost free climate. *I. missouriensis* enjoys wet springs and dry summers.

