

PREPARING FOR IRIS SHOW

Rae Phillips

I. GARDEN PREP – LATE FEB/MARCH

- A. Clean flower beds/iris plants = less aphids, happy flowers
- B. First new growth on plants? Feed/spray Miracle Grow
- C. End of March, feed Phosphate (or 8-32-4); at least 4 weeks before show

II. PLANNING – EARLY/MID APRIL

- A. First buds
 - 1. Too early? Less water
 - 3. Aphids? Try water spray. Can use liquid dish soap mixed with water.
 - 4. Watering tip: keep moist but don't overwater. If possible avoid spraying directly on leaves, or especially not on buds
- B. Plan/Prep
 - 1. Transport Method (from garden to show)
 - 2. Tool Kit*
 - 3. Entry tags
 - 4. Practice with early flowers

III. SELECTION/CHOICES – APR/MAY

- A. Week Before
 - 1. View possibilities
 - 2. Complete entry tags for obvious ones
 - 3. Encourage blossoms
 - A. Too soon? Cool/dark storage
 - B. Too slow? More water/heat
- B. Day Before
 - 1. Final selections
 - 2. Winds forecast? Cut hopefuls to protect
- C. Handling Iris
 - 1. Bottom of stem, or bottom of blossom (at spathe)
 - 2. Keep stem clean of finger prints/smudges if possible
 - 3. Check for bugs, flaws
 - 4. Load in transport

(Turn over for rest)

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IV. SHOW TIME – DAY OF SHOW

- A. Early/organized = less stress, more fun, maybe winners
- B. Finish loading
 - 1. Best transport possible
 - 2. Tool kit*
 - 3. Last minute choices/cuts
- C. Concentrate
 - 1. Your space/ your irises
 - 2. Final choices, finish entry tags
 - 3. Consider alternatives
 - (Older iris can be entered as historic; extras as group)
 - 4. Placement in show containers (put water in first, then tag, THEN flower)
 - 5. No bugs!
 - 6. Final check/staging
- D. Show – Share – and maybe win. But mostly have fun!

*Possible items to consider for your TOOL KIT

Entry tags (pre-completed as much as possible); and extra Address Labels

Pencils or Ball point pens (be careful with gel point, ink may run if get wet)

Cutting tools (pruning shears, scissors, small sharp knife/exacto knife)

Towel/rag (for mopping spills, wiping hands)

Rubber Bands (usually provided) or Drapery Hooks for attaching entry tag to vase

List of iris you are bringing, with identified photos or other means of identifying

Plastic packing/insulation, or Styrofoam peanuts (something to help stabilize stalks in the vases)

Gloves (some recommend using the disposable plastic gloves for handling irises)

Possible Grooming items: Q'tips, Cosmetic brush & face powder, straight pins or needles

Note pad (for taking notes, etc.)

Small watering can (usually some available) for filling your vases (so you don't have to keep running to sink to fill them)