Home/Garden

Irises just keep getting better all the time



vant flowers with their ger geous colors and ruffled petals and falls. I have admired them for years, but shied away from adding them to my garden, be cause I have been afraid of soft rot and the dreaded iris borer.

However, I recently visited a friend's iris garden and she convinced me that irises don't have problems if you plant them properly and follow good sanitation practices

Bearded trises are such a popular flower that the hybridizers have been busy improving them for the past 40 years and now they bloom longer on sturdier plants that rarely need staking, and in more beautiful colors than ever before. They do not naturalize the way the old flags did, but they can be placed in a mixed percunial border or planted in beds devoted to iris to great advantage.

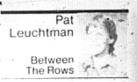
In our climate, bearded iris begin to flower before the first of June and some varieties will still be blooming at the end of July. July is the ideal time to plant or divide and transplant bearded iris, ideally before the middle of the month. This will allow the plant plenty of time to lievelop a good root system that will hold, it firmly in place and less likely to heave out with frost during the winter. Frost heaving is the main cause of winter kill.

Bearded iris grow from large this zomes which send up a fan of sword like leaves and a blooming stalk During the growing season this rhi zome also produces other rhizomes that will produce blooming plants the following year, but then it dies. When you divide your plants this old dried up rhizome should be discarded. Depending on the variety, bearded iris should be divided every three or four years. If you buy your rhizomes from a nursery, they will come with the tall leaves cut to a height of 4 inches. This will leave you enough leaf to feed the rhizome while roots are de-

If you are dividing irises, the leaves should be cut first. Then separate each new rhizome, which could be said to resemble a small whitish carrot with long feeder roots, from the clump and plant in full sun where the soil is sweet, and very well drained. The bearded iris peeds to be grown in a dry location. The planting bed should be prepared without hit fo

Tomatoes, marigolds perfect

additions to backyard gardens



gen. Do not use manure. Nitrogen will encourage lots of lush foliage but

Bearded iris do like a soil that is rich in phosphorus which you can provide by adding rock phosphate or bone meal. Dig a good sized hole and then hold the rhizome so that it is level with the top of the ground, letting the feeder roots dangle into the hole, and fill in with soil. It is important to leave the top of the rhizome exposed to the sun, it must not be cov-ered. Water the iris after planting. but after that don't worry about dry

Bearded iris come in almost every color imaginable from the deepest violet, even black, to unusual shades of brown and buff to pale pastels and white Unfortunately, in our severe northeastern climate the very deepest colors and the brown shades are not reliably hardy. There are also bicolor arrangements.

The American Iris Society (6518 Beachy Ave., Wichita, KA 67206, \$9.50 annual dues) puts out lists of award winners and recommended varieties which include One Desire (pink). Gold Galore (yellow), St. Louis Blues (deep purple), Lace Cotton (white) and Stepping Out, a plicata which means it is white with a

In the fall make sure the garden is neat: Pull off the outer leaves that are drying and remove them. Don't cui back the other leaves. Iris borers lay their eggs in garden debris. When they hatch in the spring the larvae enter the fan oferis leaves and feed for about two wieks before they start destroying the rhizome. If your iris leaves have holes or a slimy bleeding you probably have borers.

I've ordered a purple, a pink and a white that bloom in early June, a magnificent addition to my spring garden Sources Schroiners, 3625 Quinaby Rd NE, Salem, OB 4730 catalog 53 Coolog's 4455 Silverton Rd NE, PO Box 425F, Silverton Oregon 97381 catalog \$2 . Wayside Gardens, Hodges, SC 29695 catalog



The bearded iris is indeed a beautiful flower.

Garden calendar

This information is provided by the Franklin County Cooperative Extension Service.

Now is the time to: · Inspect garden plants at least once a week to detect problems before they get out of hand. For example, the removAssociated Press This is the "Year of the Tomato

and Marigold. So says the National Garden So says the National Garden Bureau, a non-profit group supported by the seed inclustry

by the seed industry. "The tomato and marigodd are easy to grow, providing ample

of origin. The Aztecs were the first

handle and germinate reliably in warm, moist soil. Soil should be Modern tomatoes are descended the aming, with a fine, loose texture from the wild cherry tomato

Chile. Historians speculate that ani treatment of hiccups, being struck by mals helped spread seeds northward injuting, or "for one who wishes to more than 2,000 miles from its center" cross a river or water safely."

Marigold seeds are large, easy to