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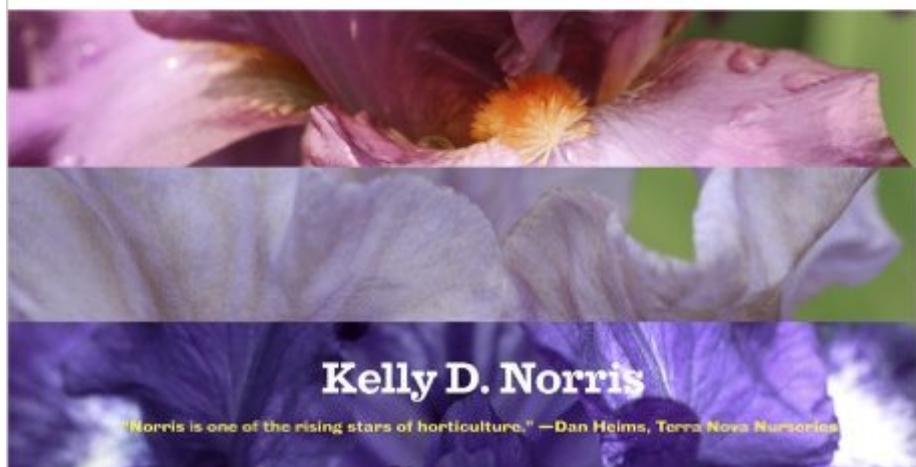
A Guide To Bearded Irises: Cultivating The Rainbow For Beginners And Enthusiasts



A Guide to Bearded Irises

Cultivating the Rainbow

FOR BEGINNERS AND ENTHUSIASTS



Synopsis

The diversity of bearded irises rivals that of any other perennial grown in temperate climates. For some gardeners, they bring back warm memories of a grandparent's garden; for others, they're a cutting-edge plant with a seemingly endless capacity for producing new forms and patterns. As the manager of Rainbow Iris Farm and co-editor of the *Bulletin of the American Iris Society*, Kelly Norris is the authority on gardening with bearded irises. His introductory chapters offer tips for successful growth, garden design, plant selection, and "creating" new irises. *A Guide to Bearded Irises* also provides portraits of the most outstanding plants in each of the six recognized categories, from the dainty miniature dwarf bearded irises to the stately tall bearded irises. A resource section lists specialty nurseries, organizations devoted to bearded irises, and public gardens with notable iris collections.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've been an iris enthusiast for over 35 years, and there is a scarcity of good books for the gardener who wants to learn what types of cultivars are available and how to grow them. Books on the genus Iris tend to be technical rather than horticultural in their emphasis, like Brian Mathew's botanical survey of the genus. The American Iris Society book *The World of Irises* has many chapters devoted to the history of the improvement of irises by breeding, which is more than most gardeners want or need. In any case, that book is quite dated now. *A Guide to Bearded Irises* is the work of Kelly D. Norris, a dedicated iris enthusiast and rising star in the world of horticulture. As the title

says, the scope of the book is limited to the bearded irises, from the tiny miniature dwarfs to the tall bearded. So arilbreds and beardless types such as Siberians and Louisians are not included. Bearded irises are the most widely grown type, and provide more than enough material for a book of this size. The information on how to grow bearded irises is thorough and accurate. For completeness, there is a chapter on known pests and diseases of irises, although Norris asserts (quite fairly, in my experience) that properly grown irises seldom experience many of these problems. There is a chapter on hybridizing irises for those readers who are curious about this activity. (Most of our current cultivars were produced through the efforts of hobbyist hybridizers.) There's also a welcome chapter on common "myths" about irises (such as the idea that they spontaneously "revert" to a different color after a few years). But the meat of this book is the description of recommended cultivars in each of the six bearded iris classes, each accompanied by large, beautiful photographs.

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