



Emerald Goddess Gardens emeraldgoddessgardens.com

- Botanical Name: *Dietes iridioides*
- Common Name: African Iris
- Plant Family: Iridaceae
- Mature Size: 2 to 3 ft.
- Growth Habit: Fan Shape
- Bloom Color: White, Purple, Yellow
- Bloom Form: 3 Petal Single
- Bloom Time: Early Spring
- Water Needs: Heavy
- Light Needs: Full Sun
- Recommended Zones: 8, 9, 10, 11
- Key Features: Beautiful Flowers Early in Season
- Suggested Uses: Mixed Perennials, Low Hedge, Color Statement
- Growers Notes : African Iris can be propagated by splitting plants in half and repotting.



Dietes iridioides or **African Iris** are evergreen lily like perennials with long, stiff, leathery sword-like leaves. They grow in fan shape similar to daylilies and spread from rhizomes into good sized 2 ft clumps. These are also called Japanese Iris or Fortnight Lilies. In the Spring they bloom atop long stalks that extend up and out of the central body of the plant.

The flowers are short lived, lasting only a day or two at most, and are the classic 3 petals and 3 sepal configuration of most all iris in milky white with a small brown dotted pattern near the center, bright yellow markings on each of the large petals and a bright blue stigma rising from the center. Bloom begins to appear early in the subtropical spring in late January to February when few things are showing color. *Iridioides* is one several types of this iris that are native to South Africa. It is thought to be one of the oldest members of the Irideae family.

The African Iris is an easy to care for, versatile plant that can easily made a part of any garden from Zone 8 to 11. It can be used as filler in mixed perennial beds, mass planted for a striking Spring statement, used as a low hedge to accent a wall or fence line. This iris will eventually put down a deep root system which makes it drought tolerant once well established, and so a good choice for embankments and berms where erosion control is needed. It will tolerate a wide range of soil conditions and adapt to soils that are consistently moist like creek banks and pond edges.

- Plant in well draining soil.
- Locate in full sun
- Provide supplemental irrigation until well established.
- Prune lightly after flowering to encourage branching and shape.
- Feed a good quality bloom boosting fertilize with the initial planting and yearly thereafter.
- Protect from frost and freeze until very well established.
- Protect mature tree from high winds.

For quick answers to your growing or planting questions, just email us at service@emeraldgoddessgardens.com

If you don't know your USDA Planting Zone, you can check the map on our website site at emeraldgoddessgardens.com

Care of Your New Plant

Here are a few basic guidelines for handling and caring for your new plant:

Direct planting of 4 inch starter size plants or plugs directly into the landscape is not generally recommended, with a few exceptions. So, for the best results with your new plant we suggest that it be repotted into a larger pot and allowed to grow larger until the new pot is filled with roots before setting out.

Check the recommended USDA Zone Range for the plant. Many gardeners are able to successfully grow plants outside their recommended Zones, but this is dependent upon providing the type of environment and care the plant needs.

- Immediately repot the new plant into a larger pot. A 6 inch pot is recommended for starter plugs, and a 10 inch in recommended for 4 inch diameter starter pots.
- Use a good quality commercial bagged potting media.
- Apply a high quality, slow release plant food according to the label directions. Do not use hot, all chemical, quick release fertilizers like 6-6-6 or 10-10-10.
- Check the recommended location in the plant specifics and position accordingly. Note that plants that are suitable for growing in full sun should be acclimated, and young plants should be protected from direct, very hot sun while they are becoming established.
- Maintain consistent and uniform moisture in the soil. Take care not to over water. Some plants prefer to dry a bit between waterings, so check the plant specifics.
- Packing crystals may be re-used to conserve water, but do so with caution as they hold 6000 times their weight in water.
- If re-using crystals, mix and incorporate them thoroughly throughout the potting media.
- Be sure the pot can drain, and that the bottom of the pot does not sit submerged in water for more than a few hours.
- Monitor for signs of disease or insects and treat accordingly.
- Protect from frost and freeze, as even cold tolerant plants can be damaged by cold when young, or during cold conditions more severe or longer duration than the average for the Zone Range.
- Prune or pinch lightly and often when the plant is young and actively growing to strengthen the central stalk, encourage branching, and build uniform shape.
- Monitor for signs of disease or insects and treat accordingly

Many tropical and subtropical plants can be grown as potted plants indefinitely, and can be successfully wintered over indoors in colder climates, so long as they are moved indoors well ahead of temps into the 30°F's, are maintained in warm environment (minimum 40°F) with adequate, full spectrum light, consistent soil moisture is maintained, and any pest or disease issue are promptly and properly addressed.

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