



## Emerald Goddess Gardens [emeraldgoddessgardens.com](http://emeraldgoddessgardens.com)

- Botanical Name: *Iris missouriensis*
- Common Name: Iris "Kevin Matthews"
- Plant Family: Acanthaceae
- Mature Size: 24 – 30 in.
- Growth Habit: Clumping
- Bloom Color: Purple & Yellow
- Bloom Form: Iris
- Bloom Time: Early Spring to Early Summer
- Water Needs: Moderate
- Light Needs: Full Sun
- Recommended Zones: 5 - 11
- Key Features: Beautiful, large flowers,
- Suggested Uses:
- Growers Notes :



The **Louisiana Iris** are a group of five species native to Louisiana *Iris fulva*, *Iris brevicaulis*, *Iris hexagona*, *Iris giganticaerulea*, and *Iris nelsonii*. Some of these species are also native to other Southern and Southeastern states, but Louisiana is the only area where all five can be found in their native habitats. These species will cross pollinate and interbreed readily within the pool of the five, but not with other species. There are thousands of hybrids in an endless array of color combinations, some naturally occurring and others by the design of dedicated hobbyists and horticulturists who just love the plants. And there is plenty about them to love.

They are easy to grow, span a wide range of climates, and while they prefer moist, boggy soils, and so make wonderful additions to ponds and aquatic designs, they can also be successfully grown on higher ground, or as potted plants. They are reasonably pest free. In warmer climates, they are primarily evergreen, and begin to look their best in the Fall and Winter when other plants are generally not at their peak. Their dormant period is mid summer, when it's generally too hot in the tropics and sub-tropics to be outdoors anyway. A good offset to this is to give them other summer bloom plants as bedfellows.

For those of us in the tropics who have been forced to either admire those lovely Dutch, Japanese and Siberian Irises in pictures, or know and love them for a few fleeting months each year before they succumb to the sauna conditions of tropical summers, discovering the beautiful Louisiana Iris is a true gardening epiphany. They are as versatile as they are beautiful.

**"Kevin Matthews"** was hybridized by Leeann Connelly as a part of the "Fallen Heroes Series" of Iris. The large purple flowers this hybrid produces are absolutely beautiful. The deep toned purple is accented by vibrant yellow daggers encased in black that protrude from the center of the bloom.

- 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 fertilizer with the initial planting and yearly thereafter.
- Protect from frost and freeze until very well established.
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For quick answers to your growing or planting questions, just email us at [service@emeraldgoddessgardens.com](mailto:service@emeraldgoddessgardens.com)

If you don't know your USDA Planting Zone, you can check the map on our website site at [emeraldgoddessgardens.com](http://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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