

Blue Flag Iris

Iris virginica

Blue flag iris has wonderfully textured, light-green foliage emerging directly from the ground in dense clumps. It grows 12 to 18 inches tall, producing lavender-blue flowers about 4 inches across in the spring. They are native to boggy areas where water stands all year long. The plant is grown and used for its foliage effect as well as the flower display. The plant flowers for a short period in the spring but the coarse-textured, upright foliage makes this a year-round favorite for a wet garden spot. On 2-foot centers, a thick ground cover can be formed in about 2 years. The individual plants will be nearly indistinguishable by that time. Although full sun is tolerated if soils stay moist, a well-drained, partially shaded location provide best habitat for Iris. Plants can be allowed to dry out slightly in a shaded location with little damage to foliage or flowers. As with other irises, over-fertilization will encourage foliage growth at the expense of flowers.

Type: perennial

USDA hardiness zones: 8b through 11

Uses: border; mass planting; container or above-ground planter; naturalizing; water garden; accent

Origin: native to Florida

Height: 4 to 7 feet **Spread:** 1 to 3 feet

Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Light requirement: part sun to part shade

Soil tolerances: acid; slightly alkaline; clay; sand; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

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Photo: UF/IFAS