



PRESCOTT AREA IRIS SOCIETY

July 2008

The Digging Season

Seems like we just had blooms. Now is the time to dig and divide. Iris clumps which have been multiplying for 3-4 years get crowded, start growing into neighboring clumps and tend to bloom much less vigorously. Because iris are heavy feeders, digging, dividing, transplanting, replenishing the soil and adding nutrients is necessary.

The best time to dig and replant iris in our area is mid-July through early August. The replanted rhizomes need time to become re-established and start new root and leaf growth before it freezes.

Check list for digging and dividing:

- If your soil is difficult to dig, water the iris the day before you dig
- Dig only one variety at a time in order to avoid mixing varieties
- Be sure ALL the iris of one variety are dug up and no strays are left in the ground
- Keep the plant label with the clump at ALL times
- A digging fork is the best tool to lift the clump out of the soil
- Remove excess dirt from clump
- Use a sharp knife to separate rhizomes. Remove and discard the older, fanless rhizomes
- Cut off and discard diseased looking rhizome parts
- Some growers dip rhizomes in a 10% solution of bleach and water before replanting.

Planting instructions:

When replanting your rhizomes dig a large hole and add 3-5 shovels full of compost to each hole. Mix into the soil. Then add the following amendments 1 cup triple super phosphate, 1 cup bone meal and 1/2 cup 10-10-10 or other low nitrogen fertilizer. Mix into the soil. Water the planting hole thoroughly. The moisture stimulates new root growth.

Plant several rhizomes of the same variety in the hole with toes pointing toward the center and fans about 8 inches apart. Each rhizome should be placed at ground level on a little mound of soils with the roots spread in all directions. The roots should be placed down in the hole. Pack the dirt firmly under and around the rhizome so no air pockets remain. The top of the rhizome is not covered with soil.

Water in the rhizomes to settle soil around roots. Water newly planted rhizomes 2-3 times a week. Let the soil dry out between each watering. The goal is to encourage new growth as indicated by new leaf production. This may take 2-3 weeks. Once new growth is established, water 1-2 times per week.

Finish by labeling each variety correctly.

If you have questions or need a demo, call Linda Rossman, 777-8110.



Lift clump with shovel or digging fork



Remove excess dirt from clump



Separate rhizomes from clump

What do I do With All those Surplus Rhizomes!!

- Donate your surplus iris to the club for the Aug. 2nd rhizome sale.
- Discard the smaller rhizomes
- Remove soil from rhizomes, wash rhizomes with firm spray of water
- Remove dried leaves
- Separate rhizomes so air can circulate around and let them dry overnight before placing rhizomes in *paper bag*
- Put each variety in a *separate* bag. Place photo in small plastic baggie and staple to sack.
- Use a felt pen to write the name of the iris, its color and year of introduction on the paper bag.
- If the variety is unknown, write the color on the bag and attach a photo if you have one.
- *Deliver rhizomes to Linda Rossman by July 25*

Marking Party Volunteers July 26, 8:30 a.m. 5942 Old Black Canyon Highway

If you are planning to attend the Marking Party, email or call Linda: Lindarae@cableone.net, 777-8110. We have room to accommodate 15 workers.

Items to bring:

Large paper grocery bags
Permanent marking pen with fine point
Scissors or clippers for trimming leaves and roots
Clean rag for wiping leaf
Rhizomes you are donating
Photos of iris blooms for the rhizomes you are donating
A sack lunch—drinking water will be provided

Rhizome Sale August 2, 9:00 a.m.-12:30 Sharlot Hall Museum under the canopy

A great place to buy iris at affordable prices is your club rhizome sale, August 2. Last year we had 145 different varieties for sale and we are expecting an even larger number this year. There will be a photo of the bloom for each named iris so it should be fairly easy to pick the colors you want to include in your garden.

Volunteers are needed to assist with the sale and Cam is eagerly awaiting your call—776-8660. Two hour shifts from 8:30-10:30 and 10:30-12:30 are still available. This is a great way to meet other club members.