



Scientific name: *Iris missouriensis*

Common name(s): Rocky Mountain Iris, Western Iris, Western Blue Flag

Family: Iridaceae (Iris)

Native: CO, Upper Midwest, Northwest, Southwest

Habitat: Montane, Aspen forests, moist meadows, streambanks

Rocky Mountain Iris rhizomes are mildly poisonous; wear gloves when handling. Plant rhizomes shallowly over a baseball-sized mound of soil with 1/3 of the rhizome above the soil and with the roots horizontally spread to support the plant. Leaves emerge from the leafy end of the rhizome. Lift and divide clumps in late summer or fall to maintain vigor. Combine with Columbine (*Aquilegia sp.*), Harebells (*Campanula rotundifolia*), Chiming Bells (*Mertensia sp.*) and native grasses.

Plant type: Rhizomatous perennial (dense clumps, reseeds)

Elevation: to 11,000'

USDA Hardiness Zone: 3

Exposure: Full sun, light shade

Soil: Clay, loam; prefers good drainage

Moisture: High, moderate; will grow in drier areas if moist through flowering (spring through mid summer)

Flower color: Light blue, deep lavender, white (rare)

Bloom time: Late spring to mid summer

Mature size (height x width): 12-30" x 9-12"+



Propagation: Native Iris have a deep dormancy that is best tackled with scarification (in this western species) and outdoor stratification. Sandpaper the seeds. Sow outside in situ or in cells or pots. Cover lightly. Exposure to temperature fluctuations coaxes higher germination percentages.

