



Knik Germplasm wild iris

Iris setosa

Selected Class Release “Natural”

Uses: Landscape, Revegetation, and Erosion Control
Southeast, Southcentral, and Interior Alaska

Background Information

Wild iris is also called blue flag. It is in the Iridaceae family.

This beautiful flower does not have a scent. A close look at the sepals (larger drooping purple parts) and the petals (3 small, narrow, erect parts) shows exquisite markings.

Wild irises bloom in June and July. The seed pods are a cup containing brown seeds. It generally takes at least two years from seed to blooming adult plant.

Established wild irises produce 3 to 4 blooms per stalk each year.



Map from Hultén, 1968.
Used with the permission of Stanford University Press.

Distribution

Iris setosa can be found throughout most of Alaska in bogs, meadows, and on lake shores. It is also found in dryer areas where the seed has taken hold. It is not found north of the Brooks Range.

Knik Germplasm wild iris seed is maintained by the Alaska Plant Materials Center for commercial production.

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Plant Identification Number: 9097732

Knik Germplasm wild iris seed was collected from the Eklutna Marsh, Alaska, by Stoney Wright in 1993 (Wright, 2005).

This native forb is a Selected Class Release by the Alaska Plant Materials Center (PMC). This means it has been grown and harvested at the PMC and continues to preserve its excellent performance.

This beautiful forb is recommended for use in landscaping, revegetation, and erosion control. Its seedlings are vigorous, the plant increases naturally, and its rootstalk holds the soil firmly.

Knik Germplasm is tolerant of many kinds of sites. Although normally considered a wetland plant, it does well in dry soil, too.

Interesting Note:

Wild Iris was used in the past as an ingredient in arrowhead poisons.

According to Moerman (2002) the Aleut made a drink from the roots for a laxative, whereas the Iñupiat considered the whole plant poisonous. The petals were used for a grass dye for baskets.

Alaska Plant Materials Center
Serving Alaska's needs in production of Alaska native plants

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Knik Germplasm wild iris for Alaska Revegetation Purposes

Knik Germplasm wild iris is a perennial. Once established, controlling weeds is relatively easy.

It increases naturally, primarily by rhizomes. This makes wild iris beautiful for landscaping and a viable choice for revegetation projects.



Iris setosa seed
~73,000 seeds per pound

To Produce Knik Germplasm wild iris

Seeds of wild iris can be shaken from the capsule in mid-August. In a large-scale operation, first harvest pods. Then the seed can be cleaned with air separation.

Germination of Knik Germplasm is highest when the seeds are planted right after harvest. Freeze seeds if they cannot be planted immediately.

Drill seed 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep as soon as possible. Seed germination is best when subjected to the freeze/thaw cycle of winter (Skinner, 2005).



Wild Iris in production at the Alaska Plant Materials Center, Palmer.

Wild Iris

The iris was named for the Greek goddess of the rainbow. According to mythology, one of the duties of Goddess Iris was to guide souls, after death, between the worlds. The iris then can represent a happy reincarnation.

The iris was also known as the Fleur-de-lis—France's national symbol.

References

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