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Flowers of Red Violet in Dramatic Display

By Hans Dekker

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Although many flowers are red-violet, several types of Japanese Iris exhibit the color in a most spectacular fashion.

Japanese Iris (*I. ensata*) are the last of the Iris to bloom and usually bloom about a month after Bearded and Siberian Iris have finished. Japanese Iris are a beardless iris that bear the largest flowers of all. Spikes that reach up to three feet tall carry blooms in unique shapes, colors (including the most brilliant red-violets), and striking patterns that measure as much as one foot in diameter. Broad foliage with a raised mid-rib makes a vertically interesting backdrop for other plants when the Japanese Iris has finished blooming.

The Japanese Iris is native to much of eastern Asia and has been cultivated in Japan for over 200 years. Single blooming varieties have three standards and three falls, doubles have six falls and peony-type blossoms are downward sloping with nine or more falls. Cultivars with red-violet flowers include the "Royal Banner", the "Velvety Queen", and the spectacular, dark red-violet "Laughing Lion".

Hardy in zones four through nine, rhizomes can be planted from October to March. However, Japanese Iris grown from seed are smaller but bloom with exquisitely elegant flowers.

The Japanese Iris is an extremely beautiful waterside plant that exhibits breath-taking reflections when placed near water's edge. During summer, many gardeners pot Japanese Iris and place them at ponds edge or in shallow tubs of water. However, in winter pots need to be removed from standing water to keep rhizomes from rotting. When planting Japanese Iris in a perennial garden, mulch helps retain the abundant moisture they love as well as controlling weeds.

Japanese Iris do best in acidic soil in full sun to part shade. Rhizomes are typically planted 2-inches deep and 18 inches apart. Plants should be lifted and divided every three to four years, either after flowering is finished or in the fall.

Although the Japanese Iris is beautiful in all its variations, the unusual patterns and shapes of the red–violet cultivars add distinction to any perennial garden.

Hans is editor of The Gardening Guides, knowledge for your Garden

How You Can Change The Coloring Of Cut Flowers

By MalaMaal.com

How You Can Change The Coloring Of Cut Flowers

To change white carnation–type petals to green, stand the long–stemmed flowers in water containing a green aniline dye.

Other suitable aniline dyes may be used to achieve colored stripes on white flowers.

Place flowers over a basin of water which contains a very small amount of ammonia in a bell glass. The petals will usually change. For example, many violet–colored petals will change to green; red colors will become green, white will turn yellow and dark carmine will turn black.

Violet–colored asters can be moistened with a very mild solution of nitric acid. The ray florets will turn red and will also

acquire a pleasant scent.

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