

## ***Iris tectorum* Japanese Roof Iris <sup>1</sup>**

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Edward F. Gilman, David Marshall<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

Japanese roof iris has wonderfully textured, light-green foliage emerging directly from the ground in dense clumps (Fig. 1). It is closely related to the native crested iris. It grows 12 to 18 inches tall, producing blue flowers in the spring. Flowers are displayed in a showy fashion within the clump of foliage.



### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Iris tectorum*

**Pronunciation:** EYE-riss teck-TOR-um

**Common name(s):** Japanese roof iris

**Family:** *Iridaceae*

**Plant type:** herbaceous; ground cover

**USDA hardiness zones:** 6 through 10 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 7:** year round

**Planting month for zone 8:** year round

**Figure 1.** Japanese roof iris

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

**Planting month for zone 10:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** border; mass planting; ground cover; edging

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, David Marshall, agricultural extension agent and program leader, Leon County Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

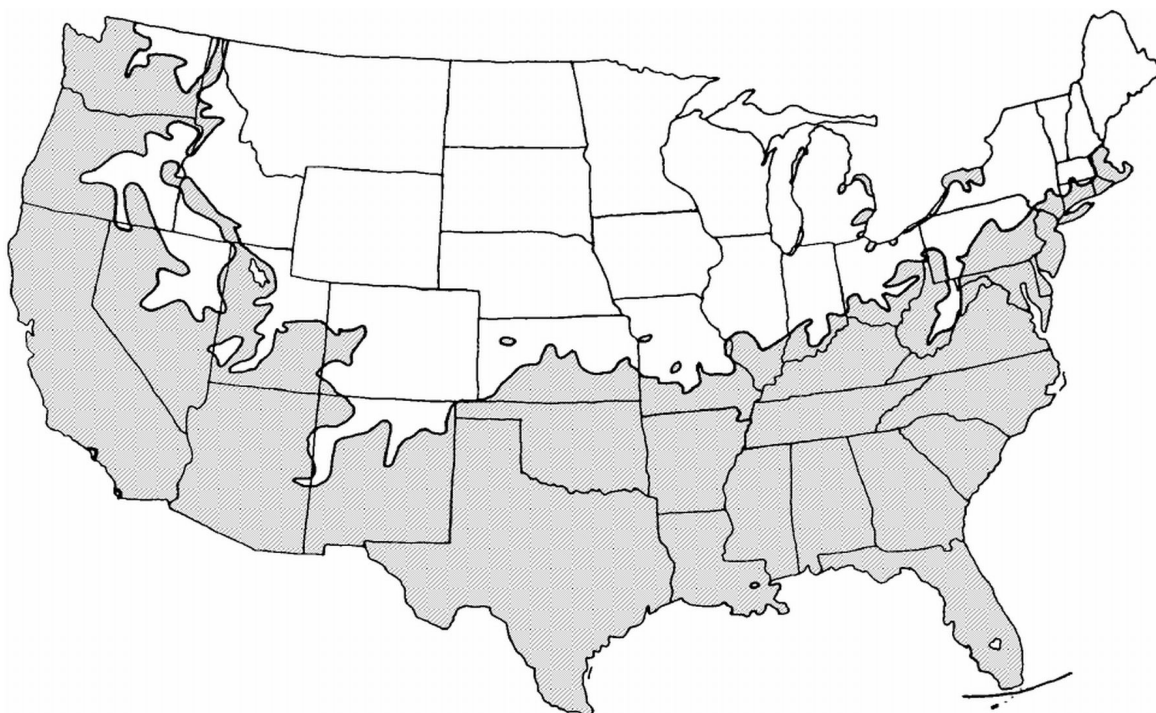


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

### Description

**Height:** 1 to 1.5 feet

**Spread:** 2 to 3 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** coarse

**Leaf blade length:** 12 to 18 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** white

**Flower characteristic:** spring flowering

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** linear

**Leaf venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** semi-evergreen; evergreen

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** unknown

**Fruit length:** unknown

**Fruit cover:** unknown

**Fruit color:** unknown

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig color:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** not applicable

### **Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun

**Soil tolerances:** acidic; sand; loam; clay

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown

**Plant spacing:** 24 to 36 inches

### **Other**

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

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

### **Use and Management**

The plant is grown and used for its foliage effect as well as the flower display. Many people may not notice the flowers nestled within the foliage clumps, but it is hard to miss the coarse-textured foliage. It is well suited for planting in mass in front of a shrub border, or as a ground cover. On 2-foot centers, a thick ground cover can be formed in about 2 years.

Although full sun is tolerated if soils stay moist, a well-drained, partially shaded location provides the best habitat for Japanese roof iris. Plants can be allowed to dry out in a shaded location with little damage to foliage or flowers. As with other irises, overfertilization will encourage foliage growth at the expense of flowers. A light application once each year should be enough to maintain good growth and a reliable flower display.