



## Dig

- Every 2-3 years; divide bearded iris anytime after flowering through August/September/October (also early spring).
- Using a garden fork, carefully dig around the bearded iris plant. Try not to pierce the rhizome with the fork.
- Gently lift the rhizomes out of the soil.

## Clean

- Shake off any loose soil. Rinse off any remaining soil with a garden hose.
- Inspect for damage.
- Look for small to medium holes, frayed or eaten leaves or leaves with dark streaks, sawdust, frass (caterpillar poop) or rotten rhizomes. These are signs of borer damage.
- Look for soft spots. This is another common iris problem called soft rot.
- Cut away any damaged or diseased parts with a sharp knife or pruners.
- Discard any diseased parts.
- Disinfect your cutting tool with rubbing alcohol between cuts, to prevent further contamination.

## Separate

- Old fans do not reflower but do make new fans. Separate clumps into rhizomes with 2 fans with healthy roots by making a clean cut through the rhizome.
- Replant about 6 inches apart.
- Cut the foliage to about 6 inches to make the plant easier to work. (fan)

## Replant

- Choose a well-drained full sun location.
- Enrich the soil with compost, sand or peat as needed.
- Dig a shallow hole that will be wide enough to spread out the rhizome's roots.
- Create a mound in the center of the hole and place the rhizome on the mound spreading the roots into the hole. Add bone meal.
- Cover the division with soil, leaving  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the rhizome above the ground.
- Water well.



## Symptoms

- New growth is small and stunted.
- Saw tooth edges on leaves dripping with sap.
- Leaves that are loose and rotted at the base so that they can be easily pulled off.
- An entry hole that the borer has made in the top of the rhizome near the base of the leaf fan.

Iris borer larva



Females lay eggs that do not hatch until the following spring. The eggs are very small only about 1/50 of an inch across and less than half that in height. When first laid they are creamy-white but eventually they become distinctly lavender. This borer has been removed from the rhizome. It's flesh-pink, and oozes a yellow-green liquid when disturbed.

Iris borer pupa



This is an iris borer pupa. When the larva (worm) has completed its growth, it moves out of the rhizome, migrates several meters away from the iris, and enters a pupal stage before transforming into an adult. They are chestnut coloured, can be found quite far from the iris. They "wiggle" when touched.

The iris borer moth is nocturnal, not easily seen and difficult to distinguish from other moths by the average gardener. Usually appear about the second or third week of September and depending on the weather, may continue through October and even into November.

## Prevention

- Keep iris beds extremely clean. Remove dead foliage.
- Thorough clean up in spring and autumn/winter.
- Inspect irises during the growing season. Pinch any leaves with evidence of borers to squash them.
- Divide irises every 2-3 years.
- Rhizomes can be soaked in 1 part bleach and 9 parts water.

## Biological control

- Nematodes (worms): apply when leaves are expanded but before flowering; above 10° C ;water well

*Caution: Pyrethrin and Cygon (banned) are sometimes recommended for borers. They have been associated with health problems in humans.*



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