

The Guardian Gardener's Handbook: A Quick Guide for New Members

New to GG? It can seem overwhelming. There's a lot to learn. Here's a quick guide of steps to take and ideas to consider. Questions? Just ask!

- You inquire about GG.
- We send you an introductory email and ask you to read a few sections of the *GG Handbook*.
- You read those and, if you're still interested, write back and answer our questions (address, etc.).
- We reply with information about the GG Forum with instructional attachments.
- You apply to register in the GG Forum and let us know you've done that.
- We approve your registration.
- You edit your profile, following the instructions.

NOW WHAT?

- **You do some serious thinking.** What kind of irises do you want to grow? Do you know how to grow them well? How much space do you have? How do you want to set up your all-important records? (Note that we offer help with that on the HIPS website; click on the Guardian Gardens tab.) Be realistic about numbers, especially at first.
- **Time for some research.** Learn all you can about the irises you hope to grow (see "Contact Information & Useful Links" elsewhere in this handbook). Learn how to determine which irises are rare and where you can get them. Read all the sections of the *GG Handbook* and the related materials. Explore the HIPS website. Explore the AIS website, and especially the Encyclopedia.
- **Prepare space in your garden.** No skimping — this is where the rubber meets the road. You're going to grow and preserve and propagate rare plants, so do your best to prepare the soil the way they like it. We recommend you start small and build your collection (and your self-confidence) over time.
- **Time to get irises!** As you'll know by this point (having read the *Handbook*), we hold an annual GG Share-Out in which you may acquire rare histories for the cost of postage. That share-out happens in summer. Even though you're new and have nothing to share yet, you can choose

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irises from other GGer's lists.

But please also consider purchasing some. If a vendor is offering a rare historic, we as GGers need to snap it up. Vendors try hard to keep their stock healthy, but weather and other disasters happen. Luckily, historic irises are much less expensive than shiny new ones, so you don't need to spend much to acquire some very exciting antiques. Also, we need to support the vendors who sell historic irises. Modern irises are much better sellers, so vendors who grow and sell historics do it as a labor of love.

- **Plant or pot your irises** and give them the best care you can. Read more over the winter; learn as much as you can. Participate in forums.

- **Enjoy!**