

"Iris germanica "Florentina" or Orris Root"

"Iris Florentina has been in cultivation for hundreds of years and is a graceful plant that **should always be included in your English Garden.**

It has thick rhizomatous **roots** which when **dried and ground** up have the **delicate scent of violets**. Unfortunately it can take up to three years for the roots to become fully dry and develop their sweet smelling scent so if you wish to make your own - be warned you will need patience! It can then also be used as a fixative for **pot pourri**.

Other uses of this violet scented powdered root – It has been used for hundreds of years in the making of soaps and perfumes, and in sachets to perfume clothes and bed linen. Today fields of Orris irises are still grown in Italy, especially around Florence for this same purpose.

Plant description Iris Florentina is a hardy perennial with gray/green sword shaped leaves. Reaching 2 to 3 foot (60 -1m) it flowers in late spring and early summer. The flower stems may have two or three branches of fragrant blooms which are of the very palest blue with a yellow beard.

Plant them with annuals especially poppies and larkspur when their contrasting foliage will set off the more delicate leaves of the surrounding plants.

Cultivation Iris Florentina likes well drained soil in a sunny spot and benefits from a yearly helping of compost. It is easy to grow and as long as its roots do not sit in water it will thrive - it will even put up with partial shade if its roots are kept well drained.

Propagation - Divide the roots in late spring or early autumn. Irises are not often used as cut flowers but they look striking and will last at least three days if picked in the early morning or evening."