Walking Iris

Neomarica gracilis



Walking Iris flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 24 inches

Flower Height: 32 inches

Spread: 24 inches

Spacing: 12 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Apostle's Iris, Apostle Plant

Description:

This variety is quite lovely when massed together in the shade garden; long, graceful dark green leaves arch upwards, embracing fascinating orchid-like flowers; locate where the flowers can be appreciated close-up

Ornamental Features

Walking Iris has spikes of fragrant white orchid-like flowers with burgundy throats and blue stripes rising above the foliage from mid spring to mid fall, which are interesting on close inspection. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its sword-like leaves remain dark green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Walking Iris is an open herbaceous annual with a shapely form and gracefully arching foliage. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Walking Iris is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Walking Iris will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity extending to 32 inches tall with the flowers, with a spread of 24 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 12 inches apart. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in partial shade to full shade. Keep it well away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for sandy, acidic soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by multiplication of the underground bulbs.

Walking Iris is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.