

Iris Pumila in Maryland

In response to article “Types of MDBs “ by Robert Pries

Iris pumila is everything a miniature dwarf should be and as the primary parent in the history of many MDBs we continue to look to this species for our future in hybridizing. That was the reason that I wanted Iris pumila in my garden.



Pumila Seedling 06OPsp01

I had learned from my work with aril and arilbreds that it was easier to get a desired species through seed rather than purchasing a cultivar that might or might not survive the crazy weather of a mid-Atlantic state like Maryland. For two years I tried to grow I. pumila from seed without success using the same method I used for all my seeds to that date, the use of garden dirt that I used normally. Finally I changed to adding more compost, chick grit, and Pro-mix® along with garden soil for bearded species. This cut the amount of clay the seeds had to fight to germinate during especially wet springs but also this combination kept moisture more even during those time where the spring weather was drier than normal.

Although I now have seedling 06IPsp01, I also bought John Burton’s introductions “Steppe” and “Rosa Brooks” both Iris pumila through Winterberry Gardens in Virginia. After a season in pots they have finally been placed in the garden beds with great increase and vigor. It would seem that getting cultivars of I. pumila has great advantages. Still I potted four sets of I. pumila seeds from various sources and hope for greater success not only to build my species collection for also crossing for miniature dwarf bearded.