



## HOW TO GROW ALASKA WILD IRIS FROM SEED

by  
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1. Collect wild iris pods that are brown and just beginning to open. Spread the pods onto newspaper or in a shallow tray. Air dry for at least 1 week. Iris pods average 1 1/4 inches long and contain an average of 70 seeds per pod (range 0-147). The largest pods do not necessarily contain the greatest number of seeds.
2. Separate seeds from the pods by vigorously shaking the pods over a screen (i.e. hardware cloth, soil sieves; holes must be large enough for seeds to fall through but small enough to retain trash and pods). Small bits of chaff, dried leaves, pod pieces can be removed by blowing air over the seeds.
3. Store dry seeds in plastic bags in the refrigerator (40°F for one year; 32°F or colder for longer storage).
4. Seeds may be sown directly outdoors. Because of a complex dormancy mechanism in the seeds, germination will not occur until the second growing season.
5. For faster results, stratify the seeds by mixing one part (by volume) of seeds in at least 2 parts clean, moistened quartz sand. Place this mixture into a plastic bag (zip loc's work well), and store in the refrigerator (NOT FREEZER) at 40°F for 4 1/2 to 5 months. For direct planting outdoors on June 1, start this stratification process in mid January. For greenhouse planting on March 1, start stratification in mid October.
6. **OPTIONAL:** Remove the seeds from the sand and soak in 1000 ppm gibberellic acid (available commercially from greenhouse supply houses) Seeds should be completely submerged and covered by about 1/2 inch of liquid for 24 hours. Rinse off the gibberellic acid and sow immediately. Seeds may be surface dried for an hour or two to facilitate sowing. This GA treatment is not absolutely necessary but does improve germination percentages and uniformity of seedling emergence.
7. Sow seeds outdoors in flats of you favorite seed-starting mix. Moisten thoroughly and cover with black plastic to exclude light. Remove this plastic after 10 days. Seeds will germinate rapidly in about 7 days, and complete seedling emergence will occur within about 2-3 weeks.

If sowing in cell packs (i.e. 6-packs), the following sowing rates are recommended in order to get 100 percent filled cells:

No gibberellic acid - 4 seeds per cell

Gibberellic acid - 3 seeds per cell