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Iris tenax

[Synonyms : *Iris gormanii*]

OREGON IRIS is a deciduous perennial. Native to North America it has beardless, yellow-centred, purple-streaked, bluish-purple (occasionally white, cream and yellow) flowers. It is also known as Flag, Iris minor, Toughleaf iris, and Tough-leaved iris.

Tenax means ‘tough, strong, rough or matted’ with reference to the leaf fibres.

The leaf fibres were used by North American Indian tribes to make ropes, nets and snares.

This was the only iris to be introduced to Britain by the famous Scottish botanist, David Douglas (1798-1834). He collected it in 1825 and it first flowered in England four years later.

Medicinally, the plant used to be recommended for the treatment of depression and vomiting.