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Iris x germanica

[Synonyms : *Iris germanica*]

FLAG IRIS is a bulbous perennial variety. It has large yellow-bearded, purplish-blue or deep blue flowers with an orange-blossom-like scent.

It is also known as Bearded iris, Blue flower de luce, Common flag, Common iris, *Deutsche Schwertlilie* (German), *Fjurdulis ikhal* (Maltese), Garden iris, German flag, German iris, Iris (English, French), *Keore-ka-mul* (Hindi), *Kosatec* (Slovak), *Kosatec německý* (Czech), Liberty iris, *Lirio* (Spanish), Mogador orris, Mogadore orris, Morocco orris, *Mor süsen* (Turkish), Orrice root, Orris root, *Padma-pushkara* (Sanskrit), Purple flag, *Saksankurjenmiekkä* (Finnish), *Schwertlilie* (German), *Trädgårdsiris* (Swedish), Veronese orris, *Violrot* (Swedish), and White flag; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of flame, and ‘I burn adversity’.

Warning – the fresh root can cause vomiting.

Germanica means ‘of or from Germany’.

One authority suggests that this hybrid could have been the Illyrian iris eulogised in ancient records. Another notes that the flag iris is believed to have been cultivated in the monastery garden at Reichenau in the Swiss Alps in the 9th Century.

Flag iris is a familiar sight in Moslem cemeteries.

The juice of the fresh roots was used generally in cosmetics and was believed more specifically to be able to lighten freckles.

Today the juice is used commercially as an ingredient for the perfumery industry and as a flavouring by the toiletries industry in for instance toothpastes. It provides a smell for the detergent industry for washing powders. And both the tobacco and drinks industries turn it as a flavouring (the latter for example in Chianti).

Flag iris became a state emblem for Tennessee in the United States in 1933.

Medicinally, herbalists used to recommend flag iris for treating fluid retention, and in India it has been used to treat diseases of the gallbladder.