

Iris cristata

Dwarf Crested Iris

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

Indigenous* to wooded slopes and floodplain forests, this diminutive iris forms a lovely carpet in various shades of purple when it flowers in spring. Its colorful blooms and easy culture make it a valuable addition to a woodland garden.



Ground Cover	Flowers En Masse and Close-up
Height: ½–¾ foot	
Spread: ¾–1 foot	
Bloom Color: Blue-violet with yellow and white	
Characteristics	
Mound-forming, herbaceous perennial	
5–6 inch, sword-like leaves remain green in color throughout the season and dense to the ground	
2½-inch blue to violet to purple flowers bloom for 1–2 weeks in April; sepals with white and yellow signal with three parallel, ruffled, ridge-like crests	
Spreads by rhizomes to form dense colonies	
Attributes	
Tolerates drought and dense shade	
No serious diseases but snails and slugs may be a problem; deer rarely damage	
Toxic if eaten and may cause rash if touched	
Attracts hummingbirds and bees	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
Soil Requirements : Well-drained, acidic	Ficaria verna - Lesser Celandine
Light Requirements : Sun, Partial Shade	Muscari atlanticum , M. botryoides , and M. neglectum - Grape Hyacinths
Water Requirements : Moist	Vinca minor - Periwinkle
If sited in full sun, needs sufficient soil moisture	
Excessive vegetative growth from high fertility	
Remove old blooms promptly after flowering	
Divide every 3 or 4 years after flowering	*It is native to DC and parts of MD and PA. In VA, it is common in the southern half of the mountains and Piedmont; and rare in the northern mountains and Piedmont. In NoVA, it is native to Fairfax and Prince William counties.
Use in borders and in rock or woodland gardens	
Hardiness : USDA Zones 3–9	
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria	

Images by Mary Free from *Creating Inviting Habitats* and Quarry Shade Garden