

Higo Iris

Blooms from Late May through Mid-June

Features of Higo Iris

What makes it different from other irises?

A tall stem, large petals, and big center

Three or six large petals that spread out widely + the small petals at the center stand up, creating a beautiful silhouette



How many subtypes are there?

There are **1,296** different cultivated varieties that Mangetsu-kai has registered as of 2015

What colors are there? 60% are white

White Dark blue Violet Reddish purple etc.



Color clarity is paramount!

There are many varieties such as single color, bicolor, outer ring, and other irregular patterns.

History of the Higo Iris

The founder of Higo Iris is Yoshida Junnosuke (1786-1870)

1830s Yoshida Junnosuke, a domain retainer, studies cultivation secrets under Shogunal retainer Matsudaira Sakingo (Sho-o) by request of the 10th Hosokawa Lord of the Kumamoto Domain, Hosokawa Narimori, and receives seeds, plants, and records on how to grow irises.

→ **Junnosuke promises to keep the Higo Iris confidential**

1826 - 1860 More than 10 Higo Clan retainers begin cultivating irises in Kumamoto
"Hanaren" groups meet at night on the 16th day of each month
Meetings continued late into night; bright moonlight provided light going home
Breeds and growing methods continue to progress

1886 The "Mangetsu-sha" group is formed

1893 Effort is put into cultivating irises and producing new varieties

The group is renamed to "**Kumamoto Hanashobu Mangetsu-kai**" and continues to operate to this day

Appreciating Higo Iris

Normally, Higo Iris is grown in a flower pot and displayed in a tatami room!

- ① Stand and look down at an angle for the best view of the center.
- ② Sit at a distance to admire the flower shape, color, leaves, pot, and overall figure.

The flower only lasts 3 days! Enjoy the 3 stages!

1st day: Starts blooming 2nd day: Expands 3rd day: Full bloom



Let's View the Higo Iris!

About 2,000 Higo Irises are planted at **Shohinken in Yatsushiro City**

Suizenji Jojuen Garden
Zoological and Botanical Gardens
Higo Hosokawa (Tokyo)



Potted Iris Exhibition

Kumamoto Castle:

In front of Castle Keep, Josaien,
Ninomaru Rest Spot

From late May to mid-June

*Exhibition period or location may be subject to change.



Mangetsu-kai's Rule of Higo Iris Confidentiality

- Keeping Junnosuke's promise and preserving the purity of the true Higo Iris -

All the plants and seeds belong to the group, and members may not give them to anyone. Plants and seeds must be returned when a member leaves the group!

In 1910, a Tokyo University professor reported that "the Higo Iris is unlike any other flower not only in Japan but the whole world" at the International Botanical Congress.

→Higo Iris becomes well known worldwide

→The group receives a proposal to enter the Higo Iris at the 1929 Paris Expo, but refuses to keep their promise of confidentiality

In 1930, the American Iris Society requests for the sale of seeds but is denied due to group regulations.

Kumamoto Hanashobu Mangetsu-kai continues to observe this rule to this day!

Shohinken is the only location permitted to plant Higo Iris in the ground.

Through the hard work of several Mangetsu-kai members, the true varieties of Higo Iris continue to be preserved.

The Higo-Style Iris that is for general sale is not owned by the Mangetsu-kai.



