

# 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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**

More than 10 Higo Clan retainers begin cultivating irises in Kumamoto

1826 - "Hanaren" groups meet at night on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of each month

1860

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.



## ❁Precious Treasures of Kumamoto❁

The six varieties of traditional flowers unique to Kumamoto cultivated by the Higo samurai during the Edo period

2025 Vol.3  
Late May – Early June

Higo  
Peony



Higo Iris



Higo  
Morning Glory

Did you know?

# Higo Rokka

Higo  
Camellia



Higo  
Sasanqua



Higo  
Chrysanthemum

## ❁Let's see the center of the flower!

Large center (the pistil)    Single layer of petals    Clear color

Let's see what makes each flower distinct!

## ❁Carrying on Tradition & Spirit!

The spirit of “*Higo mokkosu*” has preserved the methods of cultivation, formation and appreciation of Potted Plants, Flowerbeds and Bonsai  
The profound world of Higo Rokka!

## Let's Learn More about Higo Rokka!

Created by Meisters of Greening in Kumamoto City Team てんとうむし(Ladybug)

We support the preservation, inheritance, and development of the Higo Rokka!



## ❁History of Higo Rokka❁

Beginning in the 1700s,

The 6th Hosokawa Lord of the Kumamoto Domain, Hosokawa Shigekata (1720-1785) encouraged clansmen to practice horticulture as a form of self-discipline.

In the 1800s, during the reign of 10<sup>th</sup>-generation Hosokawa Narimori (1804-1860), the clansmen formed an enthusiast group called

**Hanaren** to establish new varieties of flowers and set rules to grow them.

Taking flowers, seedlings, or seeds out of the group was prohibited!

In 1960, six flower varieties that could be enjoyed during all four seasons were selected for an exhibition held in the presence of the Emperor.



These six types of flower have been collectively called **Higo Rokka** ever since.

## ❁Let's See the Higo Rokka!

### Blooming Calendar

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
			 From mid-February to early April								
<b>Higo Camellia</b> ひごつばき											
Can be found at the Zoological and Botanical Gardens, Prefectural Athletic Park, Suizenji Jojuen Garden, Country Park in Kumamoto and Higo Hosokawa Garden in Tokyo											
* Exhibition at Zoological and Botanical Garden and Suizenji Jojuen Garden											
			 From late April through early May								
<b>Higo Peony</b> ひごしゃくやく											
Can be found at the Zoological and Botanical Gardens, Suizenji Jojuen Garden in Kumamoto, Higo Hosokawa Garden in Tokyo and Kyuhoji Ryokuchi Park in Osaka											
* Exhibition at Suizenji Jojuen Garden, Tsukawara Museum											
			 From late May through mid-June								
<b>Higo Iris</b> ひごなしょうぶ											
Can be found at Shohinken Garden, the Zoological and Botanical Gardens, Suizenji Jojuen Garden in Kumamoto and Higo Hosokawa Garden in Tokyo											
* Exhibition at Kumamoto Castle											
			 From July to September								
<b>Higo Morning Glory</b> ひごあさがお											
* Exhibition at Kumamoto Castle, Suizenji Jojuen Garden, Koraimon Gate and Kumamoto City International Center											
			 From mid-November through early December								
<b>Higo Chrysanthemum</b> ひごぎく											
Can be found at Suizenji Jojuen Garden											
* Exhibition at Kumamoto Castle, Suizenji Jojuen Garden											
			 From November through December								
<b>Higo Sasanqua</b> ひござんか											
Can be found at the Zoological and Botanical Gardens, Suizenji Jojuen Garden, Prefectural Athletic Park in Kumamoto and Higo Hosokawa Garden in Tokyo											
* Exhibition at Suizenji Jojuen Garden											

\*Exhibition dates and locations are subject to change or may be cancelled.

\*Entry to the flower garden named Higo Meika-en at Kumamoto Castle's Takenomaru is prohibited post-Kumamoto Earthquake. The Rokka are observable at the exhibitions within the castle.



## ❁Used in a Variety of Designs Too!

Manhole: Higo Camellia (Kumamoto City Waterworks and Sewage Bureau)



Did you know Higo Rokka

Search