

Special plants *Pat Mansey*



Iris lazica

Iris lazica is a rhizomatous beardless iris, which makes a fan shaped clump of leaves, producing 4 inch stemmed flowers which are lavender blue and white with a central yellow stripe on each fall.

This iris is related to *Iris unguicularis* but does not need the same very hot dry situation in which to thrive; in fact it actually prefers a shady damp position, where it will steadily increase. It can be propagated by seed or division. An advantage over *I. unguicularis* is that it does not present the same scruffy appearance of dead leaves at flowering time as they are broader and can be more easily tidied.

The flowers of *I. lazica*, like those of its relative, are perhaps best appreciated when picked and brought indoors where, although scentless, they can be closely admired.

Fritillary meleagris

This is the most well known fritillary, making very beautiful colonies in water meadows, its preferred situation. It has narrow grasslike 6-inch long grey green leaves and quite large square-shouldered pendant flowers, one to each stem. These are most commonly chequered in shades of deep purple, but also in various shades of paler purple, pure white and greeny white.

F. meleagris is totally hardy and will seed itself freely amongst shrubs or in grass, provided the soil remains moist in summer. Its seed can be collected and sown in trays or pots and once germinated should be left alone for two years when its bulbs will have formed sufficiently to withstand planting out. This is one of the most welcome of spring flowers, appearing after the daffodils have faded, and blending in well with erythroniums, scillas, etc.

