

## Syrian Iris Flowers for the celebration of the International Day for Biodiversity 2009

The Syrian Iris flowers can be traced back as far as 1950 B.C., when the Pharaoh Thutmosis I brought them back to Egypt after the Syrian wars in Kadesh. They are, according to Greek mythology, the messenger of the gods and the rainbow linking earth with other worlds. They have been grown in all temperate parts of the world.



The animal protection project (spana) in Syria, in cooperation with the directorate of child culture of the ministry of culture, established an Iris garden in Homs during the cultural festival of St. Elian in the year 2008. In this garden, specimens of all Syrian species of Iris were collected from all over Syria and planted there. Monitoring observations show a fantastic growth of all these species and we were able, for the first time, to detect and confirm relationships, growth factors and conditions of these species. Among these flowers, we can see *Iris auranticus*, *I. basaltica*, *I. bostrensis*, *I. damascene*, *I. calcarea*, *I. yebrudii*, *I. mesopotamica*, *I. antilebanotica*, *I. nigricans*, *I. pseudocorus* growing in the wetlands of Syria and others.

Pictures of all these species were printed as postcards of the Syrian environment and a TV film was prepared about Irises in cooperation with the Syrian Television.

In occasion of the celebration of the International Day for Biodiversity, we would like to have the Iris flowers as a flagship of our celebration in Syria in the year 2009.

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