

The Greek goddess, Iris, was the messenger of the gods and the personification of the rainbow with the duty of leading souls to the Elysian fields. Ancient Greek customs included that of planting purple iris on the graves. Similarly, during the Crusades, the Mohammedan soldiers carried iris rhizomes of *Albicans*, a white iris originally from the Yemen Mountains, with them into battle and would plant them on their soldiers' graves. This iris can often be found to this day in American cemeteries - hence its moniker, "the cemetery iris".



*Presby Honors
September*

*Nine Eleven
Remembered*



*Montclair
Remembers*

Introductions for The Presby Memorial Iris Gardens

Apropos to these long standing and symbolic traditions and after the nightmare process of absorbing the losses from 9/11, the Board President of The Presby Memorial Iris Gardens contacted an iris hybridizer in Pennsylvania.

Joan Roberts of Friendship Gardens in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania specialized in

remontant irises - those iris that bloom again in the fall. She offered to register three varieties of irises to commemorate the losses so deeply experienced here in this region.

Presby Honors September, Nine Eleven Remembered and Montclair Remembers were registered and listed in the 2004 Friendship Gardens catalog. They have been growing at our gardens and are appreciated every year

by thousands of visitors. In the summer of 2009, two alumna board members from that era helped our staff divide and replant ***Presby Honors September*** at the Essex County September 11, 2001 Memorial at Eagle Rock Reservation which overlooks the New York City skyline. Ironically, it is as if these irises knew they were where they belonged, as they have



increased and spread throughout the entire bed housing the American flagpole, outperforming the same iris here in the gardens. Please visit [September 11 Memorial at Eagle Rock Reservation](#) for details about the Essex Remembers memorial service.