





Blue flag (*Iris versicolor*)

Model number 609, Rudolf Blaschka, 1896

Harvard University Herbaria

Photo by Natalja Kent

Model on display at the Harvard Museum of Natural History

[The Ware Collection of Blaschka Glass Models of Plants](#)

Harvard's famed "Glass Flowers" were painstakingly created entirely from glass by the artists Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka between 1886 and 1936. Commissioned by Professor George Lincoln Goodale, founder of the Botanical Museum at Harvard, the scientifically accurate collection provided a way for students and the general public to study plant form and function in the 19th century through today. The collection continues to inspire generations of visitors.

Model #609, *Iris versicolor*, or blue flag, is considered one of Rudolf Blaschka's masterpieces. Made in 1896, one year after the death of his father and mentor, Rudolf achieved the vibrant, lifelike color by boldly experimenting and innovating with colored glass and paint. Leaves, stems, and flowers were painted; roots and "dead" foliage at the base were colored with his own formulations of glass enamels. The intricately painted flower petals were likely created with pigment mixed as a glue-based distemper, applied with a fine artist's brush.

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