

# Yellow Flag Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)

---

## Description

Yellow Flag Iris is native to temperate regions of Europe, Asia, and North Africa. It was imported to North America as an ornamental in the late 1700s. Since then it has been propagated as an ornamental plant, for erosion control and sewage treatment plants. It is grown and transplanted for its showy yellow flowers. Yellow Flag Iris are found in every county in Oregon and almost every state in the US except Arizona and Colorado.

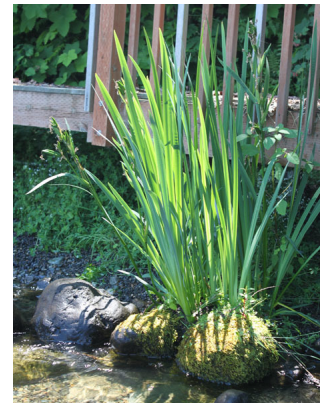
Yellow Flag Iris is a perennial plant. Shoots emerge in spring as do young seedlings. During mild winters shoots may survive and remain green through the winter. Flowering begins in late May and continues through early July. Flowers are pollinated by bees and several long-tongued flies. Seeds are produced from August – October. Each plant produces several hundred seeds. Seeds are mostly dispersed by water currents because they contain an air pocket that helps seeds float for more than a year.



## Impact

---

An invasion of Yellow Flag Iris presents a dual impact on humans and the native environment. Irrigation canals and flood control ditches are severely restricted by the plant clumps. Control can be costly and require excavation equipment or even herbicides. Any rhizome fragment quickly reestablishes the population. Invaded marshes experience significant displacement of native sedges and rushes. Many over-wintering water fowl species are dependent on sedge and rush seeds as a high energy food source. Replacement of these food sources with Yellow Flag Iris reduces the capacity for marshes to sustain waterfowl and other bird populations. Not only are Yellow Flag Iris's invasive they also sicken livestock if ingested. Its resin can also cause skin irritations in humans.

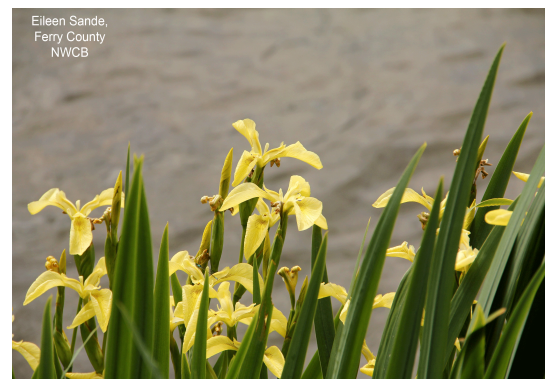


*Photo: Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board*

## Control

---

- Mechanical:** Mechanical control is preferred by pulling and digging. Be sure to protect your skin as leaves and rhizomes can cause skin irritation. If there are seed pods, remove them before pulling or digging.
- Chemical:** If it is a large area necessitating herbicide control, contact your county Noxious Weed Control Coordinator or refer to the PNW Weed Management Handbook. No biological control has been identified.



# Identification

---

Yellow Flag is a very showy species that grows 3-4 feet tall the growth is most vigorous in wet environments. It forms large plant clumps that's rhizomes can attain 20 feet wide

## Fruit

- Fruit (seed) capsules are large, 3-angled, and up to 4 inches long
- Capsules contain dozens of seeds arranged in rows
- Seeds are flattened and D-shaped
- Pods start out glossy green and turn brown as they ripen
- Floating mats of seed can be observed in backwaters and marshes that aids in dispersal

## Leaves

- Leaves are long, flat, blue-green and sword-like

## Flowers

- Pale to bright yellow or cream flowers are produced on erect plant stalks with multiple flowers on each



*Photo: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org*



*Photos: Directly above & on the left, Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board*

