

Yellow Flag Iris *Iris pseudacorus*

About Yellow Flag Iris

Yellow flag Iris first introduced to North America the 1800s as an ornamental plant for ponds and water gardens. It is a perennial aquatic plant native to Europe, western Asia and North Africa. It can grow in a variety of wetland habitats from open shoreline of lakes or rivers to floodplains. It has been planted in wastewater ponds because it is known to absorb heavy metals. Reproduction is typically by fragments of rhizomes that break off, which can also form new plants.

Distribution

Found in Southern Interior of BC, including Okanagan Valley, North Thompson, Shuswap, Central Cariboo, Similkameen Valley, Christina Lake and isolated sites in the West Kootenays.

Legal Status

Noxious Weed (provincial) *BC Weed Control Act Regulation and Community Charter-Spheres of Concurrent Jurisdiction*, Environment and Wildlife Regulation

Identification

Flowers: Bright yellow 7-10 cm across with three sepals. Flowers appear sequentially on a smooth green stem about 100 -150 cm tall.

Leaves: Green, sword shaped, erect, up to 90 cm long and 3 cm wide.

Fruits: Fruit is a dry capsule 4-7 cm long containing numerous pale brown seeds.

Roots: Thick rhizomes form dense mats. Roots may withstand drying for several months without dying.

Similar Native Species: Yellow monkey flower, Glacier lily

Similar Non-Native Species: Western blue Iris Butter and Sugar Iris



Yellow Flag Iris

Ecological Characteristics

Habitat: Yellow flag Iris likes wet feet. Habitats include ditches, irrigation canals, marshes, stream and lake shorelines and shallow ponds.

Reproduction: Yellow flag Iris reproduces quickly through seed dispersal, horizontal root systems, and fragmentation

Dispersal: Dispersal may be by seed spread or through movement of fragmented rhizomes (roots). Seeds float on the water during fall and spring. Fragmented rhizomes float and can easily move downstream or around lakeshores. Often purchased as an ornamental, but easily escapes gardens. It spreads by people giving or selling the plants, and improperly disposing of garden waste.

Impact

Economic: Yellow flag Iris can cause economic impacts through clogging up ditches and irrigation canals. Although it is generally avoided by grazing animals, if ingested, it can cause livestock to become sick.

Ecological: Yellow flag Iris creates dense stands in wet areas that out-compete native species, such as: cattails, sedges and rushes that are used by many birds for nesting. Infestations can also reduce the capacity for water storage in temperate wetlands.

Integrated Pest Management

IPM is a decision-making process that includes identification and inventory of invasive plant populations, assessment of the risks that they pose, development of well-informed control options that may include a number of methods, site treatment, and monitoring.

A. Prevention

- » Educate gardeners and horticulturists to prevent active distribution and trading.
- » Treat yellow flag Iris before seed set, monitor results and re-treat as necessary to prevent seed dispersal.
- » Monitor site annually until it is free of yellow flag Iris for several consecutive years.

B. Biocontrol

There currently are no biocontrol agents available.



Yellow Flag Iris; C. Hougen



Yellow Flag Iris; J. Leekie

C. Chemical Control

While there are some aquatic herbicides approved for use in the USA, namely glyphosate and imazapyr, none have currently been approved for use in Canada.

D. Mechanical Control

- » Hand pulling, digging or cutting yellow flag Iris is a delicate process. The risk of spread by fragmentation is very high when mechanical treatment is used. The results of mechanical treatment may also be erratic.
- » Laying heavy rubber matting as a benthic barrier to smother the plants causes the plants to respire without photosynthesis, exhausting the plant's energy reserves. Treatments of around 70 days can be effective in yellow flag Iris eradication attempts.

Disposal

Note: *Disposal of invasive plants varies by region. Contact your local government for specific information on how to dispose of your invasive plants.*

- » Tarp and bag removed plants, plant parts and seeds before transporting to a designated disposal site (e.g. landfill or transfer station).
- » It is recommended that transfer stations provide disposal bins intended solely for invasive plants. This will ensure the plant matter within the container is transported in a sealed unit and properly disposed of at the landfill.
- » Burning and composting is not recommended as extreme temperatures are required.

Common Names

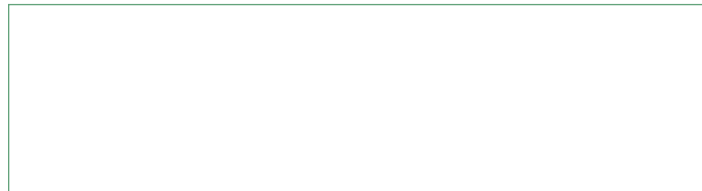
Yellow flag Iris, yellow Iris

References/Links

- BC Law.ca. http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/loo65/loo65/144_2004
- Bio One. <http://www.bioone.org/doi/abs/10.1614/IPSM-D-16-00035.1?journalCode=ipsm>
- Invasive Species Council BC. <http://bcinvasives.ca/invasive-species/identify/invasive-plants/yellowflagiris>
- King County Noxious Weed Control Program. www.king-county.gov.weeds
- Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center. https://www.wildflower.org/plants/search.php?search_field=yellow+iris&family
- Nature Conservancy Vermont. <http://www.vtinvasives.org/sites/default/files/fact-sheets/yellowiris2010.pdf>
- Ontario Invasive Species Awareness Program website. <http://www.invadingspecies.com/invaders/plants-aquatic/yellow-iris/>
- US Forest Service. <https://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/forb/iripse/all.html>



Thank you to the BC Ministry of Environment and the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for providing project funding, and to those who advised the development of these management recommendations.



ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFO