

Yellow flag iris

Iris pseudacorus

Family

Iridaceae (iris)

Also known as

Where is it originally from?

Europe, Asia, North Africa

What does it look like?

Robust aquatic perennial (<1-2 m) that grows in leafy clumps and forms dense rhizomes (<3 cm diameter). All parts are odourless when crushed. Stems are round, and several long sword-like leaves (1 m x 2-3 cm) emerge in fans from a reddish base. Pale-yellow to golden-orange flowers (up to 12 cm diameter, Oct-Dec) are followed by seed capsules (5 x 2 cm) containing many brown, flattened, 3-sided to disc-like seeds.

Are there any similar species?

Many *Gladiolus* and related species are similar, and there are four other exotic Iris species that appear in the wild. *Iris pseudacorus* is the only aquatic species that grows in clumps and has tall stems and yellow flowers.

Why is it weedy?

Rhizomes form dense floating mats, and it overtops native species that grow on margins of waterbodies. Tolerant of saline, frost, flooding and drought, high-low fertility, many soil types, and damage. Poisonous, so usually not grazed by stock.

How does it spread?

Seeds and rhizome fragments are spread by water and contaminated machinery. 'Garden escape' plant that has spread from gardens and deliberate plantings into the environment.

What damage does it do?

Rhizome mats displace native plants, especially vulnerable species that live on the margins of waterbodies. Causes flooding and changes in the water levels in swamps. Poisonous seeds may have an impact on birdlife.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Swampy ground, fresh or brackish water margins, lakes, salt marsh, and wet sandy areas.

What can I do to get rid of it?

Contact your regional council to determine the status of this species and responsibility for control.

1. Physical removal: Begin control work at margins, working upstream to downstream where possible. Dig or pull-out small infestations. Dispose of all plant material at a landfill or refuse transfer station. Ensure no plant material is left on site.

2. Cut and paste - Cut the stem/trunk as close to the ground as possible and cover the entire stump with herbicide as soon as possible after cutting. Apply glyphosate gel (120g/L strength) to the entire cut stem.

3. Foliar spray (terrestrial sites only) - Apply either glyphosate (360 g/L active ingredient at 20ml/L knapsack) plus organosilicone penetrant (2ml/L), to cover entire plant. Note: Glyphosate overspray will kill other (desirable) plants OR apply metsulfuron herbicide (600g/kg active ingredient at 0.5g/1L knapsack or 20g/100L gun and hose) plus organosilicone penetrant (3ml/L) Note: overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants and has residual activity in the soil which aids in killing below ground parts.

IMPORTANT Yellow flag can tolerate wet conditions and is often found growing in riparian or wetland areas. Herbicides may not be used in aquatic areas where it may enter the water including in wetlands. Spraying recommendations are for terrestrial sites **ON DRY LAND ONLY**. For advice on control in wetlands or in water please contact your regional council.



www.weedbusters.org.nz



Photo: Trevor James



Photo: Phil Mabin



Photo: Carolyn Lewis

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and directions for the purchase, use and storage of the product, are followed and adhered to.

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Plant tall shading species adjacent to sites, and exclude livestock. Prevent seeding, and ensure regular follow-up of sites that have been controlled, as rhizomes resprout and seed bank can reinfest bared sites.