

Yellow flag iris

Iris pseudacorus



Identification

- Semi-aquatic, clump-forming plant
- Sword-like leaves, up to 2 m long, with a distinct midrib
- Striking yellow flowers up to 12 cm across on long stalks from spring to early summer
- 5 cm long seed capsules packed with flat, disc-shaped, poisonous seeds arranged in 3 rows
- Tangled, thick tubers, which grow partially exposed along margins of waterways



Yellow flag iris. Photo M. von Tippelskirch



Yellow flag iris flowers and seed pods. Photo: M. von Tippelskirch

Control

Always harvest seed capsules first and dispose of them in a landfill or burn them to prevent re-seeding. Small plants can be pulled out. For small infestations dig out tubers and dispose of them in a landfill or burn them. When controlling yellow flag iris in streams always work from upstream to downstream. Where yellow flag has been controlled, plant tall native vegetation to avoid re-invasion and to shade out seedlings. Check the area at least twice a year for seedlings and pull them out. Bigger areas should be controlled by professional operators. Never use heavy machinery to dig out plants. Use all herbicides in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and ensure no herbicide comes into contact with other plants, the soil or waterways.

Where is it found?

Along margins of urban streams, tidal rivers, ponds, lakes and in salt marshes and swamps.

Why is it a problem?

Yellow flag iris forms dense tuberous mats excluding native wetland plants, choking wetlands and drains, and may degrade whitebait spawning areas. Its seeds prolifically and the floating seeds can be dispersed widely by flowing water.

Similar species

Stinking iris (*Iris foetidissima*) and bearded iris (*Iris germanica*) are similar but lack the distinct leaf midrib, have paler yellow flowers and are usually not found growing in water. Stinking iris leaves have a foul odour when crushed.

Status

Yellow flag has been banned from sale, propagation or distribution.



Yellow flag iris invading a waterway margin. Photo: M. von Tippelskirch