

# Yellow flag iris

*Iris pseudacorus*

## What does it look like?

Yellow flag iris is an aquatic plant that grows as leafy clumps up to 2m tall. The sword like leaves emerge in fans from a reddish purplish base. From October to December it produces pale yellow to golden orange flowers that are up to 12cm in diameter and are followed by seed capsules containing many brown, flattened, three-sided, disc-like seeds.

Yellow flag iris grows in still and slow flowing water bodies and wetlands and it can invade flood prone pasture. In other countries it has been recorded in salt marshes.

## Why is it a problem?

Yellow flag iris is a fast growing and fast spreading invasive plant that can out compete other plants, forming almost impenetrable thickets as it over tops and replaces native species. It can also grow out across the water, forming floating mats that are strong enough to support the weight of a person. It is poisonous to grazing animals and is tolerant of saline conditions, frost, flooding, drought, physical damage and many soil types.

Yellow flag iris reproduces from both rhizomes (roots) and seeds. Each seed capsule contains many viable seeds but the longevity of yellow flag iris seeds in the seed bank is unknown. It has been found to facilitate its own spread by contributing to soil compaction and hardpan development, which prevents other desired species from establishing on a site.



## Control Methods

### Herbicide control

Stem injection (all year round): 5ml glyphosate (undiluted) into each stem at base. Or,

Spray (spring-autumn): glyphosate (100ml/10L + penetrant) or metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (0.5g/10L).

Begin control work at margins, working upstream to downstream where possible. 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.

**CAUTION:** When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed.

# Yellow flag iris

*Iris pseudacorus*



## Related Links

Ministry for Primary Industries <http://apps.mpi.govt.nz/applications/nzpests-view/Article/524/Yellow-flag-iris>

New Zealand Plant Conservation Network [http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora\\_details.aspx?ID=3315](http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.aspx?ID=3315)

NZ Flora <http://www.nzflora.info/factsheet/Taxon/Iris-pseudacorus.html>

Unwanted Organisms Register [https://www1.maf.govt.nz/uor-cgi/uor.pl/show?species\\_id=36725](https://www1.maf.govt.nz/uor-cgi/uor.pl/show?species_id=36725)

NZ Freshwater Weed and Pest Visual Guide <https://www.thisisus.nz/assets/Resources/New-Zealand-freshwater-weed-and-pest-visual-guide.pdf>

Freshwater Invasive Species Guide 2020 [https://niwa.co.nz/sites/default/files/Freshwater%20invasive%20species%20of%20New%20Zealand%202020\\_1.pdf](https://niwa.co.nz/sites/default/files/Freshwater%20invasive%20species%20of%20New%20Zealand%202020_1.pdf)

Weedbusters <https://www.weedbusters.org.nz/what-are-weeds/weed-list/yellow-flag-iris/>

Check Clean Dry <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/exotic-pests-and-diseases-in-new-zealand/active-biosecurity-responses-to-pests-and-diseases/exotic-freshwater-clams-corbicula/stop-clams-from-spreading/>

## Rules

Under Section 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 no person can sell, propagate, breed, distribute or otherwise spread any pest in a Pest Management Plan, or any unwanted organism. Not complying with Section 52 or 53 is an offence under the Act, and may result in penalties noted in Section 157(1).

The National Pest Plant Accord is designed to prevent the sale, distribution and propagation of a set list of pest plants (the Accord list) within New Zealand. If allowed to spread further, these pest plants could seriously damage the New Zealand economy and environment.