





ALERT: BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR YELLOW IRIS ALONG SHORELINES, STREAMBANKS AND WETLANDS.

Species	Also known as	Native to WI?	Environmentally harmful	Height	Flower size	Other similar species	Growth
  <p>Wild Blue flag iris (<i>Iris virginica</i>)</p>	Blue flag Harlequin Blueflag Northern Blue Flag	Yes	No	Up to 3 feet	Up to 3.5 inches	Cultivars in many shades of violet, purple and blue	Typical to native plants, blue flag iris does not demonstrate aggressive growth.
  <p>Yellow flag iris (<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>)</p>	Yellow flag Yellow iris Water flag	No (Europe, British Isles, North Africa and the Mediterranean region)	Yes	Up to 6 feet	3 to 4 inches	Several pale yellow cultivars are available	Yellow flag iris is a fast growing rapidly spreading weed. It creates thickets in shallow water and along shorelines and crowds out beneficial native vegetation.

Yellow iris is a beautiful, robust, showy plant, no doubt about it! It will likely be an uphill fight to convince people to remove it when it first appears while removal is relatively easy. The roots of yellow iris form dense mats. While very young plants can likely be manually dug or hand pulled rather easily, removing mature plants typically requires equipment likely to cause considerable ground disturbance and the potential for shoreline erosion. There are presently no known biological agents for effectively controlling yellow iris. There are suitable herbicide options, but only chemicals approved for use in aquatic environments may be used and application of them in Wisconsin must be performed by a properly certified licensed professional with a WDNR permit specific to the application site.

Yellow iris spreads within an established site through root growth and to new locations by dropping seeds into water. The seeds float to other sites where they start new plants. The presence of a robust clump of yellow iris in a wet location suggests that other young plants are nearby (or will be soon). Yellow iris is sold as an ornamental plant, but has the reputation for quickly expanding beyond intended sites and escaping cultivation.

Wisconsin's original invasive species classification and rules system (WDNR NR40) adopted in 2009 did not list yellow iris as a regulated plant. The first revision of the rule is being considered for adoption in 2014. The proposed revision includes listing yellow iris as "Restricted" which will prevent its sale, transfer, transportation and intentional cultivation.

Additional concern: Caution should be exercised when handling this plant as it can cause skin irritation. All parts of the yellow iris plant are poisonous to most animals, including humans.

Yellow iris has been spotted with increased frequency throughout Vilas County in recent years. The time has come to begin looking for this plant and eliminate it from the landscape whenever possible before it becomes uncontrollable.