

Yellowflag iris
(*Iris pseudacorus*)

Currently in Montana, noxious weed infest about 8.2 million acres. Many of these state listed noxious weeds were brought to America as ornamentals for gardens, medicinal purposes, by accident in discarded soil from a ship's ballast, or unintentionally in bags of seed brought from other parts of the world. Whatever the cause of introduction non-native plant species have found their way onto Montana's state listed noxious weed list.

Yellowflag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) is native to Europe and occurs in North Africa and the Mediterranean region. This plant was introduced into the United States for use in ornamental water gardens and waterways. Yellowflag iris has been used in mining reclamation areas and sewage treatment plants because of its ability to remove heavy metals from the water through its roots. Yellowflag iris escaped into the wild and now it infests ponds, wetlands, and marshes. Yellowflag iris outcompetes native vegetation and negatively impacts wildlife and waterfowl habitat. This plant colonizes in large dense clumps and can block or clog irrigation systems because clumps interfere with water movement pathways. Yellowflag iris can grow up to 4' tall. Leaves are dark green, long, flattened, and sword-like. The leaves of yellowflag iris look quite similar to those of cattails. To tell the difference you can look at the base of the plant. Yellowflag iris leaves have a "fan-like" appearance as the leaves come out of the ground. Flowers are large and bright yellow and are the typical shape of an iris flower. Yellowflag iris has the capability of producing underground lateral roots that reach up to 20' in length. This shoreline invader is difficult to control because it can reproduce both through seeds and by fragments of its underground lateral roots. These broken root pieces can set roots and establish new plants. This plant produces fruits that are brown in color, oblong, and capsule like in shape; each one containing small dark brown disk-like seeds. Once the fruit opens the seeds fall into the water, where they are carried downstream and can start new infestations.

Please take a few moments to learn about noxious weeds. If noxious weeds are not currently a problem in your area, they may be in the near future. For more information about Montana's state listed noxious weeds, regulated plants, or weed species listed on your county weed list, please contact your local county weed district (can list weed district name here... ex: Lewis & Clark County Weed District) at _(406)_(Phone number)_. Or you can contact the Montana Department of Agriculture at (406) 444-5600.