Yellow Flag Iris is a Noxious Weed in Washington State

Yellow flag iris *(iris pseudacorus)* is widely offered for sale as a garden ornamental. As long as it is planted in backyard ponds and gardens, it will continue to escape and naturalize into new wildland areas.

WSDA
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

Why Is Yellow Flag Iris a Noxious Weed?

- ☞ This plant spreads aggressively in wet areas where it is not planted and where it is not wanted.
- ☞ It dominates lake shores, river banks, stream sides, ponds, wetlands and water to 10 inches deep.
- ☞ If yellow flag iris is not controlled, it will continue to spread in both eastern and western Washington.

What does yellow flag iris look like?

- It is the only full size yellow iris in North America.
- The plant grows from thick, brown rhizomes that clump together to form a massive root base.
- Large, drooping, green seed pods are found in the summer and early fall, after the yellow flowers are gone.

What can you do?

- ✓ Do not buy it and do not plant it in your garden.
- ✓ Remove the seed pods. It spreads by seeds and rhizomes.
- ✓ Remove individual plants, including rhizomes when possible.
- ✓ Wear gloves for protection, the sap is poisonous.
- ✓ For larger sites, develop an Integrated Pest Management plan that combines several control methods.

For more information please contact:

Your local County Noxious Weed Control Program

Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board:
http://www.nwcb.wa.gov

Washington State Department of Agriculture:
http://agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects

Iris Harvest at Spanaway Creek

On Saturday 18 July 2009, 11 volunteers harvested 3,740 pounds of iris from Spanaway Creek near the entrance to Spanaway Park. The workers used folding tree pruning saws to cut four 3-4 foot swaths through the iris field. Each swath was about 9' apart.

Iris area before harvest

Iris area after harvest

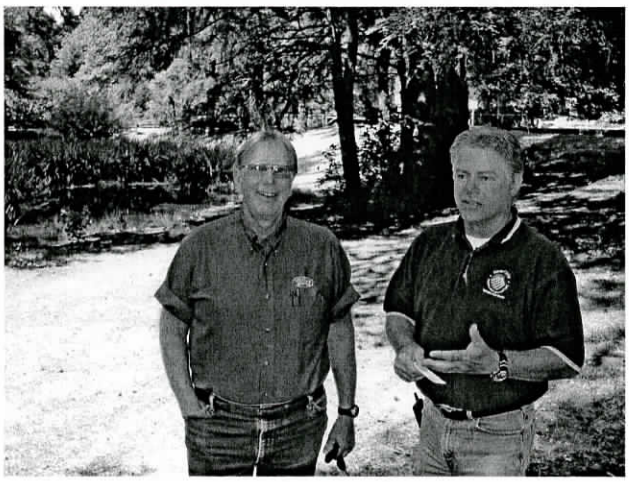
Yellow tape marked the edge of each swath. The foot deep water around the iris keep the volunteers cool despite the 80 degree weather. However, they got very muddy.

Mel Oleson, Catherine Carol & Mark Vinciguerra

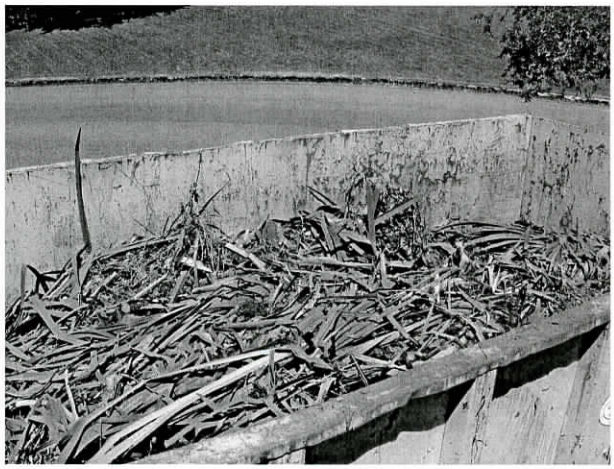
Damian Petty and Heinrich Schmidt

Angela Silva, son John and daughter Alexis helped along with Alex their grandfather. Tad from Tule Lake also volunteered.

Mitch Nelson, park maintenance supervisor, assigned Eric to use a wheel tractor with a front loader to transport the iris to a metal dump box. Rick Thompson, operations supervisor for LeMay, donated the dump box and the $458 disposal cost.



Rick Thompson & Mitch Nelson



3,740 pounds of iris roots and leaves

Eric, Damian, Mark and Heinrich

Mel Oleson and Catherine Carol brought water and provided ice cream bars near the end of the work. Alexis Silva took photos and is preparing an article for the next issue of the Spanaway-Tule Lake Times newsletter.

Iris are noted for their ability to remove pollutants from water. By removing some of the iris, the pollutants stored in the iris tubers and leaves were removed and will not be available for release into the creek. The remaining iris will continue to grow, remove more pollutants, and return to the area that was harvested. This is like removing honey from a bee hive.

by Al Schmauder, coordinator


Iris area before harvest
Jul 18 2009


Iris after harvest, 18 Jul 09
Jul 18, 2009

We need your
Help!
Can you spare
3 hours?

To improve water quality in Spanaway Creek. We are harvesting iris.

When: **This Sat, 18 July, 9-12 AM**
Where: **Spanaway Park entrance**

Why: Spanaway Lake has too much nitrogen and phosphate. This is food for algae and iris.

Iris eat these nutrients and other pollutants. They store them in their roots or leaves. If we harvest the iris we can remove these pollutants from the creek water.

The iris will re-grow and continue to remove more pollutants. This is like removing honey from a bee hive.

Plan to get wet below your knees. We will provide cotton gloves, and drinking water & maybe ice cream.

You provide the manpower and fun.