



photo: Dan Jaffe

BLUE FLAG

Iris versicolor

This spring stunner has sword-shaped blue-green leaves and produces 3–4” wide bluish-purple flowers with yellow and white blotches. It’s a natural for wet areas, and spreads by rhizomes.

Growing Information

Sunlight	Full sun to partial shade
Soil Type	Moist to wet soils to shallow standing water
Height	2–2.5’
Flowering calendar	May to June

Benefits for Wildlife

Leaves	Larval host plant for 14 species of butterflies and moths
Flowers	Attracts bees and other beneficial insects
Fruit	No
Seeds	No

Host to 14 caterpillar species, including: (common names) Whitemarked Tussock Moth; American Ear Moth; American Crescent Borer; Iris Borer Moth; Rosy Rustic; Virginia Ctenucha; Spotted Beet Webworm; Darker Moodna; Dot-and-Dash Swordgrass Moth; Verbena Bud Moth

Benefits for People

- The common name “flag” comes from the middle English word meaning reed
- The leaves may be trimmed back to 1” after fall frost
- This plant will naturalize to form colonies

Natural Habitat

- Marshes, swamps, and shorelines

