



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Dietes bicolor*<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman<sup>2</sup>

### Introduction

This clumping, robust perennial has floppy leaves radiating up and out in a weeping pattern (Fig. 1). The flower spikes are topped with 3-inch yellow flowers marked with black or orange. Although short-lived (about 2 days), the flowers are produced sporadically throughout the year. Plants grow to 4 or 5 feet tall in standing water, making it ideal for water gardens and wet soil. They reach about 3 feet in soil. Iris is also attractive when used as an accent planted in a shorter groundcover. It has a narrower leaf and a finer texture than *Dietes vegeta*.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Dietes bicolor*

**Pronunciation:** dye-EE-teez BYE-kull-lur

**Common name(s):** Evergreen Iris

**Family:** *Iridaceae*

**Plant type:** herbaceous; ornamental grass

**USDA hardiness zones:** 8B through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 8:** year round

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** border; mass planting; container or above-ground planter; edging; naturalizing; water garden; accent

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

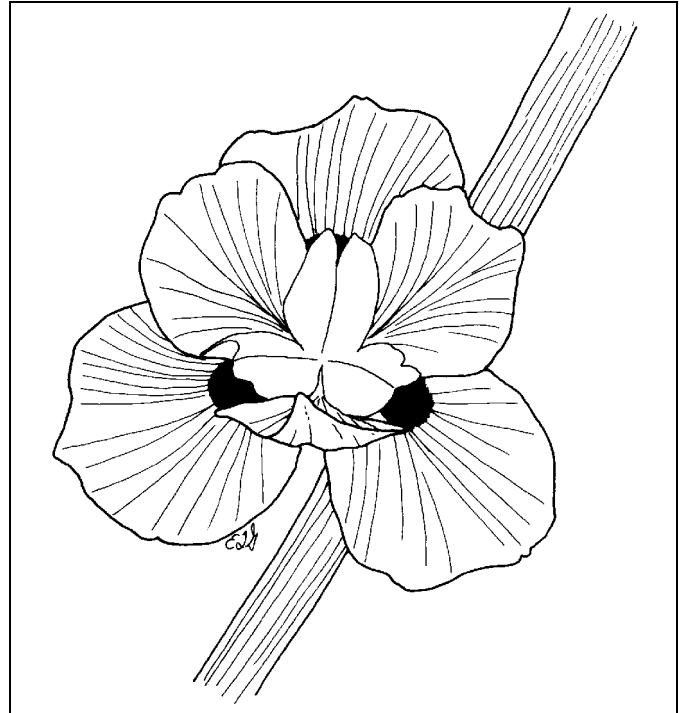


Figure 1. Evergreen Iris.

### Description

**Height:** 2 to 4 feet

**Spread:** 2 to 3 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** fine

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-178, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1999. Please visit the EDIS web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap, or national origin. For information on obtaining other extension publications, contact your county Cooperative Extension Service office. Florida Cooperative Extension Service / Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences / University of Florida / Christine Taylor Waddill, Dean



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** linear

**Leaf venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 18 to 36 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** yellow

**Flower characteristic:** flowers periodically throughout the year

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** elongated

**Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch

**Fruit cover:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** green

**Fruit characteristic:** persists on the plant

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

**Current year stem/twig color:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** not applicable

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun

**Soil tolerances:** extended flooding; slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Soil salt tolerances:** poor

**Plant spacing:** 24 to 36 inches

## Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

Iris will bloom best on rich, moist soil but will tolerate moderately dry soil conditions, growing in nearly full sun to partial shade. Plants in the full sun appear to do best with frequent irrigation. Cold temperatures (below 25-degrees F.) cause leaf browning. These leaves can be removed in the spring to clean up the plant. Otherwise, this iris requires no maintenance except for a light fertilization or two each year. Plants can be easily transplanted to other areas of the landscape.

Propagation is by seed or division of the matted clumps. Whole plants are lifted and the rhizomes divided every three years or when new plants are needed.

Nematodes are the main pest problem. Scales can cover the foliage and cause a severe problem.

### Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.