

Neomarica spp. Walking Iris¹

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Introduction

Neomarica is a clumping herbaceous perennial that reaches a height of 18 to 36 inches (Fig. 1). The walking iris is a fairly durable plant that bears attractive, light green leaves and small iris-like yellow flowers periodically during the spring, summer and fall seasons. The flowers are short lived, but provide enough color to be interesting.

General Information

Scientific name: *Neomarica* spp.

Pronunciation: nee-oh-MAR-rick-kuh species

Common name(s): walking iris, twelve apostles

Family: *Iridaceae*

Plant type: herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: border; edging; mass planting

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 2 to 3 feet

Spread: 2 to 3 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: open

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: coarse



Figure 1. Walking iris

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: deciduous

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf blade length: 18 to 36 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white; yellow

Flower characteristic: summer flowering; spring flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit cover: unknown

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

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; plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; acidic; sand; loam; clay

Drought tolerance:

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

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

The walking iris is quite lovely when massed together in the shade. The upright foliage combines with the occasional flower to strike a bold pose in the landscape.

Place walking iris in an area of the landscape that receives partial to full shade. It is tolerant of a wide range of moist soils but will not endure drought conditions. It is best to err on the wet side. This perennial is frozen to the ground in the winter but will reappear in the spring.

Neomarica caerulea has blue flowers; *Neomarica gracilis* has white flowers with blue margins; *Neomarica longifolia* has yellow flowers with brown/mahogany splotches on the petals; *Neomarica northiana* has yellow flowers.

The walking iris may be grown from seed or divisions. They also propagate themselves through plantlets that form at the tips of the flower stalks; the flower stalks bend to the ground, and then take root.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.