

Sacred lotus

Nelumbo nucifera

Description

Introduced to North America as a water garden plant.

Habit

Perennial, emergent aquatic plant that produces individual flowers and leaves directly from the root system.

Leaves

Float on the surface of the water or are held up to 6 ft above the water by their petioles; circular peltate blades, 0.75-2.5 ft across, medium green or blue-green in color, hairless; margins are smooth, often undulating up and down, leaves that are above water are depressed toward the middle; many veins radiate from the center and become forked.





Stems

Light green in color, terete, hairless, smooth or somewhat prickly, contains hollow chambers that keep stems (petiole) erect and convey oxygen to the root system.

Flowers

Held up 6 ft above the water surface by peduncles (flowering stalks), 4-8 in across, consisting of about 15 pink tepals, a golden yellow receptacle, and a dense ring of golden yellow stamens; receptacle is located in the center of the flower, cone shaped, and has 15-35 short styles that look like small bumps; blooms during the summer and lasts for 2-3 months; short lived opening during the day and losing their petals by afternoon; fragrant.

Fruits and Seeds

Each flower is replaced by a seedpod spanning 3-4 in across and 0.75 in deep; becomes dark brown with maturity; individual seeds are exposed in small chambers; seedpods bend downward to release seeds.

Habitat

Native to Asia (Iran to Japan) and northern Australia; grows well in 6' deep, mucky submerged soil and a sheltered location with little exposure to wind and waves.

Reproduction

Vegetatively by its thick rhizomes and fibrous root system; also by seeds.

Similar

American lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*), which can be distinguished from Sacred lotus by their yellow flowers.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Very small populations can be controlled by hand-pulling. Physical removal should be completed before flowering and seed set. Aquatic approved herbicides may control populations. Application of aquatic herbicide requires permit.

Credits

The information provided in this factsheet was gathered from Illinoiswildflowers.info, the Missouri Botanical Garden and the Wisconsin Dept. Of Natural Resource. Individual species images that appear with a number in a black box are courtesy of the Bugwood.org network (<http://www.invasive.org>). Individual photo author credits may not be included due to the small display size of the images and subsequent difficulty of reading the provided text. All other images appear courtesy of Google (<http://images.google.com>).