

New Invaders Watch Program

Early Detection and Rapid Response Network

COMMON NAME: SACRED LOTUS

ALTERNATIVE NAMES: Oriental Lotus, Indian Lotus, Lotus

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Nelumbo nucifera*

FAMILY: Nelumbonaceae

ORIGIN: Asia

US INTRODUCTION: Introduced to the U.S. as an ornamental plant. The plant has escaped cultivation in southeastern states, as well as some New England states, and Ohio.

MAJOR PATHWAYS OF SPREAD:

- Birds
- Ornamental use

IDENTIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS:

- Aquatic plant that produces individual leaves and flowers directly from root system.
- Leaves float on the water or are held up about 6 inches above water by their stems. The leaves are circular and indented in the middle giving the leaves a funnel-like shape.
- Flowers individual, are held up by their stalks about 6 inches from the surface of the water. Each flower is 4-8 inches across, and have pink petals. The receptacle holds the seeds of the flower, and is located in the center of the flower, resembling an upside down cone. The receptacle is surrounded by a dense ring of golden stamen.
- Grows in small ponds and shallow areas of lakes and rivers with little exposure to wind and waves.

NATIVE LOOK-ALIKES:

- **American Lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*):** Flowers are yellow instead of pink. Rare in our region.
- **Fragrant Water Lily (*Nymphaea tuberosa*):** Unlike the sacred lotus, the fragrant water lily is white and does not contain the lotuses distinct cone-like receptacle. The leaves of a water lily are circular, and lay flat against the surface of the water. The leaves also contain a distinct "slit" in the side.



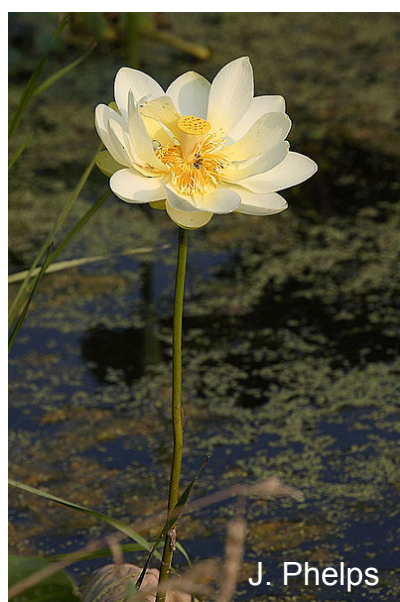
Sacred Lotus Flower



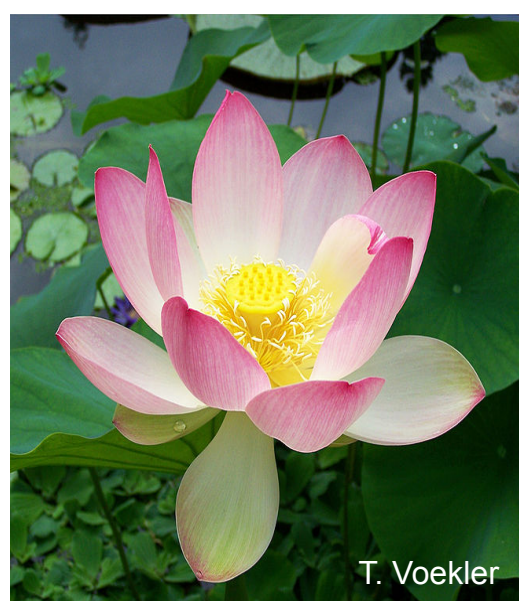
Sacred Lotus Receptacle



Sacred Lotus Leaves



American Lotus



Sacred Lotus



Fragrant Water Lily

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Illinois Wildflowers.

http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/wetland/plants/sacred_lotus.htm

USDA Plant Profiles.

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=Nenu2>