



Gardeners Helping Gardeners Succeed

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All About Ponds

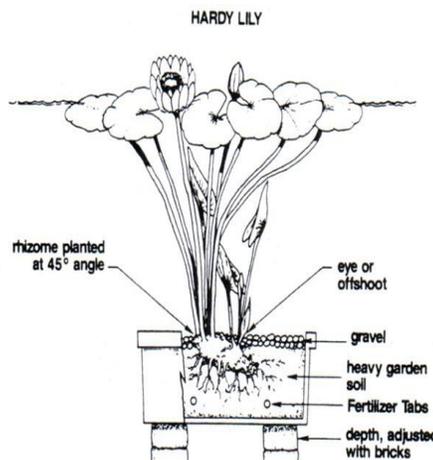
Pond Plant Handling

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Planting Instructions

When you get pond floaters, water lilies and lotus, keep them cool and shaded until you are ready to put them in the pond. Do not expose them to air or sunlight before you are prepared to deal with them. Water lilies and similar plants, such as water fringe and water poppy, will dry out quickly. Some exposed leaves and stems are likely to dry out and die, even if they are being floated in the pond. Plants which grow with their leaves out of water may need shielding from hot sun for a few days while they adjust. Water lettuce and hyacinths (floaters) may also need adjusting. Place them in partial shade to begin with and then expose them to full sun again over a period of days. Most pond plants prefer full sun once established – the more sun they get, the better they will do and the more they will bloom. In our climate, water hawthorne and poppies will benefit from partial shade.

Plants should be potted in pond planting soil or clay. Avoid highly organic soils, as decomposing organics may create toxic conditions. Definitely do not use any commercial potting mixture which includes peat, vermiculite, perlite, or manure, as most of the ingredients will float. Water loosens the soil considerably and many pond plants are buoyant, so pack the soil firmly around the plant. Fill with soil to 2" from the top of the pot. Adding 1" of gravel or rock will help keep the soil in, especially around large fish which like to dig in soil. Lower the pot into the water slowly, giving water a chance to displace air without disturbing the soil.



Use a 4" to 8" wide pot for smaller aquatics, such as water clover, fringe, or poppy. Use a pot 6" to 10" wide for arrowhead, iris, etc. Water lilies should start out with an 8" to 10" wide pot. If a plant has insufficient roots to permeate most of the soil in a few weeks, it is better to start it off in a smaller pot and move it up in pot size as it grows, just as with a houseplant. In this manner, plants may eventually inhabit pots up to 18" or even 24" across. The roots aerate the soil and help prevent the growth of anaerobic bacteria, which produce toxic byproducts inhibiting plant growth. Shallow and wide containers are preferable to narrow and deep containers, giving more room for expansion.

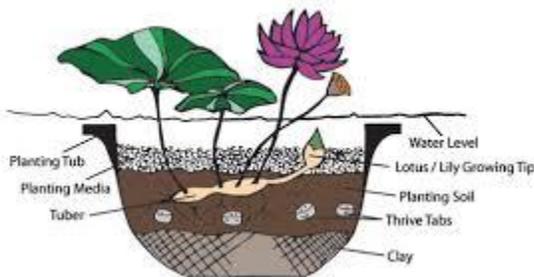
Most plants can be centered in their pots. If a plant has a rhizome or tuber, such as iris, pickerel, or hardy water lilies, place the back of the rhizome at the edge of the pot, and the front (the growing tip) toward the center of the pot. This allows the rhizome more room to grow horizontally across the pot. To avoid

turning the water green when fertilizing, always use an organic fertilizer or one specifically for pond plants. Also, do not place plants grown above ground in your water as they usually have rapid release fertilizer in their soil and they can cause an algae bloom.

Tropical Water Lilies: Plant outdoors after the water temperature remains 65 degrees or more, late May or early June for most of the country. Setting the plant outdoors any earlier will shock it and delay growth (to get an early start use a submersible heater in a small tub). Pot into a container sized appropriately for the root system. The ultimate size of the plant will depend partly on the size of the container, although a 2 gallon pot will grow a nice sized plant. Use soil and fertilizer for hardy lilies, except use 2 to 3 times as much fertilizer once plants are established and in active growth. Plant tropical lilies in the center of the pot. Pots may be as shallow as 5" under water or as deep as 18", with 8" being a good average. Shallow water is warmer, so growth is faster. To actively winter over, keep in a heated greenhouse. To store the tubers, wait until the plants have started to die back for the winter. Cut leaf stems and roots from tuber, and rinse well. Soak briefly in a mild fungicide solution if available, then store in clean, barely damp sand in a cool place, preferably 40-5- degrees F. Begin growth in spring in warm shallow water under good light.

Wait until the pond has warmed up to place outside. Tropical lilies bloom profusely, far more than hardy lilies and until later in the fall. **These are special order only.**

Lotus: Lotus tubers are banana-like in shape. Handle carefully, as the growing tip is easily damaged. Use shallow and wide containers of 5-25+ gallon capacity (dwarf lotus may be restricted to 2-5 gallons if desired). Place tuber almost



horizontal so that the end of the tuber is about 2 inches under the soil, and growing tip is barely exposed. A stone may need to be placed gently on the soil over the buoyant tuber to hold it down while rooting. Position tuber end against the pot edge and growing tip toward the center. Place pot 2-4" under water surface. Once the lotus is growing well, it may be place up to 12" or even more under water, depending upon the height of the leaves. When lotus is established and growing actively, fertilize heavily, two to four

times as much as for hardy water lilies. Once foliage has browned in the fall, lower pot to below freezing level. Lotus grows superbly above ground in cured whiskey barrels or other above-ground tubs, but do not allow it to freeze solid during the winter. A submersible heater in a small tub will give you an early start in the spring. In our high winds, make sure you have a protected spot because they can be torn or damaged. **These are special order only.**

Hardy Water Lilies: Plant hardy lilies in mesh, perforated pots or remove from the pot and place directly on the liner 12" – 24" deep. Place several stones tightly around the root area, to keep the Koi from eating them. This method allows the plants to naturalize and grow bigger and faster. They also speed up decomposition of foreign material. A word of caution: lilies like a lot of fertilizer and many types are available in a type of spike. Do not shove or pound these in as you may put holes in the liner.



Many shallow water loving plants (bogs and marginals) can be removed from their pots and placed in the stream, along the sides or on the higher portions of the pond. Place rocks, fist size or larger against the root ball to help stabilize the plan against the winds. The roots will wrap around many of the rocks for additional support.

Some pond plants are very aggressive and should be kept in pots unless you don't mind having a bog develop over a 5 to 10 year period. Cattails, large growing Rush, Water Mint, and Horsetail Reed are the worst culprits.

