



Bucks Country Gardens

Water Lilies and Lotus Culture

HARDY WATER LILIES

Hardy water lilies grow horizontally (across the planting container). Large size containers are essential – a 32-quart tub (one-bushel size) is ideal. Other acceptable containers are wooden boxes (construct from untreated lumber. Do not use a red wood which is toxic underwater), tubs, half barrels, and metal tubs that have been painted with a good coating of underwater type non-toxic plant.

Use good rich garden soil (top soil) and well-rotted dairy fertilizer. Avoid packaged potting soil and dried manures. They are unsuitable for water lily culture. Fill tub or box half full with garden soil and well-rotted dairy fertilizer mixed at a ratio of four parts soil to one part manure. Add 1/2 cup (4 oz.) of granular 10-10-10 fertilizer and mix thoroughly. Fill container up to approximately two inches from the top with good garden soil only. Plant the lily with the end furthest from point leaves are growing from against one side of the container so the lily will grow across the planting container. Firm the soil around the rizome leaving the crown exposed. Add one inch of gravel over the top of the soil to prevent goldfish from fouling the water.

Carefully lower the completed planting into the pool to a depth of approximately six inches. Water lilies start best in the somewhat shallower depth and can be lowered after good growth is established – 12 to 18 inches is ideal. If the pool depth is more, put containers on concrete blocks or bricks to bring them up to the proper depth.

LOTUS (NELUBIUM)

The larger the container the lotus are planted in the better they will do. Minimum for lotus (other than the dwarfs, which will grow in small containers) is the large painted tub. Boxes of at least 3 square feet by one foot deep are preferable. Larger is better.

Use good garden soil only (do not add manure). Fill tub or box half full and mix in 1/2 cup (4 oz.) of granular 10-10-10 fertilizer per bushel of soil used. Fill container to approximately 2 inches from top. Plant tuber horizontally like the hardy lilies. Add 1 inch of gravel. Lower into pool to a depth of 6 inches.

We recommend planting all plants in tubs or boxes rather than directly in the bottom of the pool. The advantage being easier to maintain pool. Individual containers can be removed from the pool for replanting and fertilizing without disrupting the entire pool.

It is NOT a good practice to frequently drain the pool to clean it. Many aids are available that assist with the cleaning task without the need of emptying the pool. Normally a general cleaning and refurbishing in the spring is all that will be required. Recirculating the pool water through a fountain or waterfall aids in aeration and provides the pleasant addition of animation without the problems of a flow of fresh water into the pool. We highly recommend adding a filter unit to the recirculating pump as they remove many of the suspended particles from the water and add to the overall ease of maintaining the pool.