

Nymphaea alba

Nymphaea alba, the white waterlily, European white water lily or white nenuphar /ˈnɪnjəfɪər/, is an aquatic flowering plant in the family Nymphaeaceae.[3][4][5] It is native to North Africa, temperate Asia, Europe and tropical Asia (Jammu and Kashmir).[6]

It grows in water that is 30–150 cm (12–59 in) deep and likes large ponds and lakes.

The leaves can be up to 30 cm (12 in) in diameter and take up a spread of 150 cm (59 in) per plant.[5] The flowers are white and they have many small stamens inside.[7]

The chromosome count is $n = 42$. The genome size is 1950 Mb.[8]

It was first published and described by Carl Linnaeus in his book 'Species Plantarum', on page 510 in 1753.[6][9]

The red variety (*Nymphaea alba* f. *rosea*) is cultivated from lake Fagertärn ("Fair tarn") in the forest of Tiveden, Sweden, where it was discovered in the early 19th century. The discovery led to large-scale exploitation which nearly made it extinct in the wild before it was protected.[10]

Nymphaea candida J. Presl is sometimes considered a subspecies of *N. alba* (*N. alba* L. subsp. *candida* (J. Presl) Korsh.).[7]

It is found all over Europe and in parts of North Africa and the Middle East in fresh water.[7] In Africa, it is found in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. In temperate Asia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Siberia, Iran, Iraq, Palestine and Turkey. It is found in tropical Asia, within the Indian provinces of Jammu and Kashmir. Lastly, within Europe, it is found in Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Switzerland, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, France, Portugal and Spain.[6]

It contains the active alkaloids nupharine and nymphaeine, and is a sedative and an aphrodisiac/anaphrodisiac depending on sources.[citation needed] Although roots and stalks are used in traditional herbal medicine along with the flower, the petals and other flower parts are the most potent. Alcohol can be used to extract the active alkaloids, and it also boosts the sedative effects. The root of the plant was used by monks and nuns for hundreds of years as an anaphrodisiac, being crushed and mixed with wine. In the earliest printed medical textbooks, authors maintained this use, though warning against consuming large and frequent doses.[11]

red cultivar

