

Egyptian Lotus, *Blue Water Lily*

The Blue Egyptian Water Lily or Blue Lotus – the original habitat may have been Egypt and East Africa – has been found to grow well in Arriyadh, under certain conditions and with high maintenance. An aquatic perennial with thick, black, spongy, tuberous rhizomes, which anchor in the mud at the bottom of ponds and lakes, the leaves of this Water Lily are on leaf stalks that arise directly from the rhizome. They are large, flat, round in shape with notched margins and with a slit almost to the centre of the leaf, where the petiole is attached. Leaves are relatively short-lived and replaced regularly throughout the growing season. A single plant can cover an area of about 1 sq. m. The elegant, blue, spiky flowers, 10–15 cm across, are held above water on a strong stalk and appear from spring until the end of summer. Lasting for about four days, they open in mid-morning and close in late afternoon: they are sweetly fragrant. This Water Lily is easy to grow; it requires full sun, good soil and a minimum of 30 cm of water. It should not be planted near fountains or in fast-moving water; the plants also do not like wind. They are best planted in containers sunk into the pond and must be fertilised in the growing season in order to flower well. Propagation is simple, by division, and pot-grown plants should be divided and planted in fresh soil every year for good results. Susceptible to aphids and damaged by severe frost, the tropical Water Lily is a beautiful addition to a garden, but is not very suitable for public areas in Arriyadh.



GENERAL

Origin	: tropical
Vigour	: fairly fast growing
Humidity	: semi-humid, very humid, extremely humid
Propagation	: direct sowing, division
Maintenance	: high

CONDITIONS

Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: resistant
Salinity/ppm	: low (700 ppm)
Hardiness	: +6°C

SHAPE

Type	: aquatic
Height	: 0.3 m-0.4 m
Spread	: 1 m
Foliage	: evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: pastel blue
Size	: 10 cm - 15 cm
Period	: June - September
Smell	: sweet

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: capsule
Fruit size	: 10 cm
Toxicity	: inedible