

# AQUATIC PLANTS



## Creating a Pond Garden



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## GENERAL CARE

Aquatic plants are a great addition to your water feature. They offer natural filtration, control algae, shade the water and hide fish from predators.

**Pots:** It is best to plant aquatic plants in containers since many of them have vigorous roots that spread quickly. Pond containers are wide and shallow and do not have holes. You can use a plastic pot without holes or an aquatic fabric pot.

**Soil:** The soil should be heavy. Use sandy loam, clay loam or aquatic soil. Do not use a lightweight potting mix, as the soil is too light and will float away. Place a layer of rock below the soil to weigh the container down.

**Fertilize:** Add an aquatic fertilizer to the soil at planting time. Continue to fertilize through the growing season following the manufacturer's instructions.

**Pruning:** Remove faded foliage and flowers as necessary.

**Division:** Divide plants every few years. Their roots become congested and dividing them keeps the plant healthy.

**Winter:** Prune back dead foliage. Protect plants from freezing water by moving them to deeper parts of the pond. You can also move the entire pot with plant and place it in a sheltered area. Make sure the soil stays moist. Another option is to remove and clean the rhizomes and tubers and store in peat moss or sawdust over the winter in an area between 40 and 50 degrees. Repot in the spring.

## PLANTS FOR THE MIDDLE OF THE POND

### WATER LILIES (Nymphaeaceae)

#### Growing Tips:

- **Timing:** Plant after danger of frost has passed.
- **Light:** Full sun.
- **Pot Size:** One plant per pot 12 - 20 inches in diameter and 8 -10 Inches deep.
- **Plant:** Fill pot  $\frac{2}{3}$  with soil. Place rhizome against the side of the pot with the growing tip pointing 45 degrees upward toward the center of the pot. Cover rhizome with soil leaving the tip exposed. Add a layer of pea gravel to keep the soil in place.
- **Submerge:** For a rhizome with no leaves, place base of the pot 12-16 inches deep. For a plant with leaves, place the pot so the leaves are 6-8 inches deep until they rise to the surface, then move the pot to its final depth of 12-16 inches.

### LOTUS (Nelumbo nucifera)

#### Growing Tips:

- **Timing:** Plant once lows are above 50 degrees.
- **Light:** Full sun
- **Pot Size:** About 12 - 48 inches wide depending on variety size.
- **Plant:** Add a few inches of soil to the pot. Make a shallow trench in the soil and place tuber onto soil with growing tips facing up. Lightly cover with more soil. Gently add enough water to cover 2 - 4 inches above the soil.
- **Submerge:** Place pot in pond. Tall varieties of lotus can grow in 18 inches water. Dwarf varieties between 2 and 12 inches water.
- **\*\* Prune:** Remove only faded flowers and stems that are **above the water**, otherwise the hollow stems will fill with water causing the plant to drown.\*\*

## PLANTS FOR POND MARGINS

Place these plants near the pond's edge in wet soil or in the pond submerged in up to 12 inches of water. The water should rise a few inches up the stems.

### PICKEREL (Pontederia cordata)

### CATTAILS (Typha latifolia)

### RUSH (Juncaceae)

**ELEPHANT EARS (Colocasia)** - Treat as an annual or remove and store tubers until spring.

**PAPYRUS (Cyperus papyrus)** - Usually an annual in our zone.

**MEXICAN BUTTERFLY PLANT (Asclepias curassavica)** - Plant at the edge of the pond where the soil is moist. Usually an annual in our zone.

## FLOATING PLANTS

### WATER HYACINTH (Eichhornia crassipes)

### WATER LETTUCE (Pistia stratiotes)

Floating plants are very simple. Just set the plant on the water and you're done. The roots float below the water level and soak up nutrients from the water.

**Fertilize:** If the plant's leaves appear yellow, give it an extra dose of fertilizer. Simply soak the plant in a bucket of water mixed with a soluble fertilizer for a day or two. Rinse fertilizer off leaves before returning to the pond.

Floater's roots tend to grow vigorously. Make sure to thin roots on occasion to keep the plant from taking over.

**Winter Care:** Treat as an annual.