



GROWING *Water Lilies* IN PERTH

How to Grow Water Lilies in Perth

Water lilies (Nymphaeaceae) are an aquatic plant adored for their large glossy floating leaves and multi petalled, colourful flowers. They originate from temperate and subtropical regions and adapt very well to Perth's climatic conditions. We stock the 'hardy' species, which means the flower sits gently on the water surface, as opposed to raised above it on a stem, as found in the 'tropical' species. Water lilies are a rhizomatous family of flowering plants, which means they have a thick set of roots and shoots that are sent out from underneath.

Position

Water lilies produce flowers through the warmer months and will produce better when provided with a good position, ample sunlight and nutrition. They need at least six hours of direct sunlight a day to grow well and produce blooms. A planting depth of 40-60 cm in calm, still water is preferred. Do not place under a waterfall or water feature when constant splashing will damage the leaves and petals. Water lilies are heavy feeders, particularly during active growth and flowering. Use a water plant tablet fertiliser, which will provide slow release nutrients without promoting algal growth.

Pot, Bowl or Pond?

Most gardeners prefer to keep the lilies in a pot, submerged into a pond or water bowl. This allows for easy access should the plant need to be pruned, fertilised or transplanted. When you first purchase your water lily it may be either a bare-rooted crown or already in a pot. If bare-rooted, you will need to pot it up. Water lilies need to be re-potted every few years as the crown and roots grow. This is best done in July/August when the plant is not in active growth.

Potting Up Water Lilies

To pot up your water lily, you will need a pot larger than the root ball, regular potting mix, aquatic fertiliser tablet and some pebbles. First prune off any damaged roots or leaves. Place a layer of pebbles at the bottom of the pot to add some weight and help prevent the pot from tipping over. Add the regular potting mix to the pot. Bury the fertiliser tablet within the soil then place the water lily on top so that the plant sits vertically and evenly. Fan out the roots of the plant then add some more soil so that they are just covered. It is important to make sure the crown of the plant is just above the soil level.

Finally, place some stones on top of the soil to anchor the mix in and prevent it floating away. Water the plant thoroughly so that the soil is saturated and settled. Slowly lower the pot into the water so that air can escape slowly without pushing the soil out with it. Place the pot at a depth of 40-60cm. If the water is too deep, the plant can be elevated with a couple of bricks underneath it.

Water Lily Care and Fertilising

Continue to care for your water lily through the flowering season by pushing a fertiliser tablet into the soil of the pot once a month. This will encourage flowering. Prune off any dead growth to prevent rot. If mosquitoes become a problem in the water, add some native fish to keep the larvae levels under control.

General advice only. Please ask one of our Horticulturists if you require specific advice for your situation.