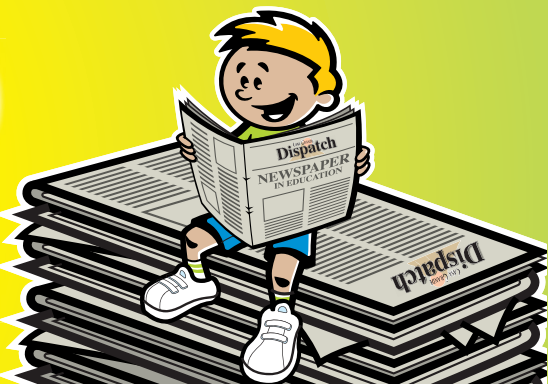


KEEPING STUDENTS WELL INFORMED AT HOME DURING SUMMER VACATION



WORLD OF WONDER Exploring the realms of history, science, nature and technology Water Lilies

Water lily flowers bloom at or above the water surface on long stalks that are attached to the underground stems.

Scientists in China have discovered the fossil remains of a 125-million-year-old flowering plant thought to be a close ancestor of the water lily.

Water lilies provide shade and protection for fish and a place for frogs and dragonflies to rest. Water lilies belong to the Nymphaeaceae plant family and come from both temperate and tropical areas of the world.

Some water lily flowers open only in the morning or in the evening to attract insect pollinators.

The large leaves or pads of the water lily float on the surface of the water.

The basics

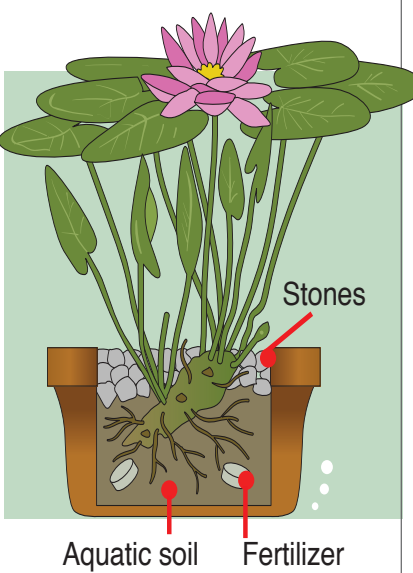
There are about 70 different species of water lily. Water lilies live in fresh water that is shallow and still, such as the waters of ponds and lakes, but some species manage to grow in slow-moving rivers or creeks.

Water lilies are native to many parts of the world. They are also popular in landscape ponds and garden water features.

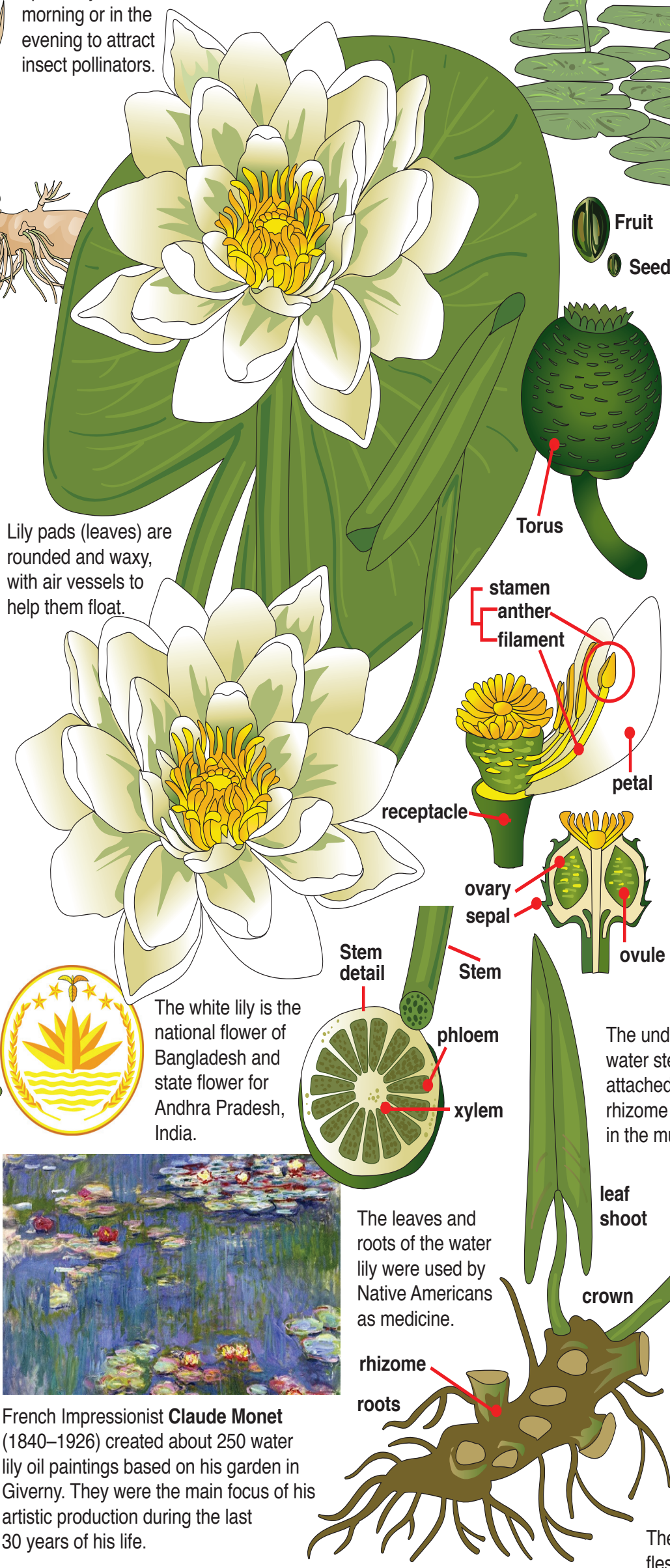
Some tropical varieties of water lily can be highly invasive. If they get into natural ponds and wetlands, they can wreak havoc on native species.

Growing water lilies

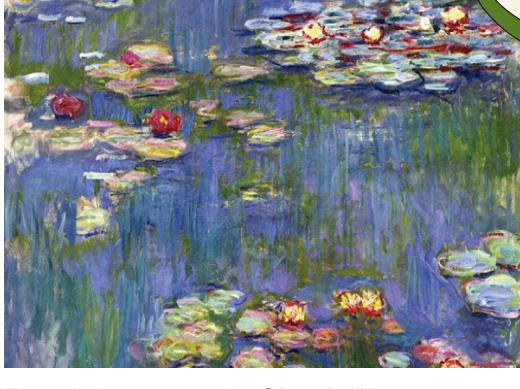
Many species of water lilies are hardy and quite easy to grow. They can be planted in decorative pots filled with water or placed into garden ponds. They grow well in 18 to 24 inches (45 to 60 cm) of water. They require plenty of sunshine and special aquatic water lily fertilizer.



Water lilies are very popular in garden ponds because they help keep the water clean, provide habitat for fish and have beautiful flowers.



The white lily is the national flower of Bangladesh and state flower for Andhra Pradesh, India.



French Impressionist **Claude Monet** (1840–1926) created about 250 water lily oil paintings based on his garden in Giverny. They were the main focus of his artistic production during the last 30 years of his life.

Did you know?

The world's largest water lily is *Victoria amazonica* from the Amazon River region. Its gigantic floating leaves can measure up to 10 feet (3 m) across, and the underwater stalks can grow 23 to 26 feet (7 to 8 m) long.

The smallest is the **pygmy Rwandan water lily**, with pads that grow 0.3-0.6 inches (10-20 mm) across. This lily is extinct in the wild, but it has been saved from total extinction by horticulturists.

The blue water lily is the national flower of Sri Lanka.

Lotus or lily?

Water lilies and lotus plants look very similar to each other but are in different families. Water lily leaves and flowers float on the water's surface, while lotus leaves and flowers are **emergent** and rise above the water's surface. The one exception is the tropical water lily; its leaves float on the surface just like hardy lilies, but its flowers rise above the surface of the water.

Lotus plants need more fertilizer than water lilies, and the flower tends to be considerably larger.

The roots of a water lily are **rhizomes**, fleshy tubers that store nutrients.

SOURCES: World Book Encyclopedia, World Book Inc.; <http://justfunfacts.com>; <https://easyscienceforkids.com>; <http://www.bio.brandeis.edu>; <https://sciencing.com>;

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