

# Growing Hardy Water Lilies

Hardy waterlilies are well suited to the climate of northern California. They are hardy to USDA zone 3, as long as their rhizomes do not freeze in winter. Most are perennial. Some cultivars will not bloom as well when air temperatures remain above 80°F for prolonged periods.

Hardy waterlilies have woody rhizomes, classified into five types: pineapple, Marliac, odorata, tuberosa, and finger.

All hardy waterlilies are day bloomers.

Plant hardy waterlilies when water temperatures reach 60°F

- J Zone 10 Any time of year
- J Zone 9 March—September
- J Zone 8 April—September
- J Zone 7 April—August
- J Zone 6 mid-April—August

**Planting:** Plant in clay-based loam, sand, topsoil—be sure soil has not been contaminated from pesticides or chemical fertilizers, and avoid lightweight soil amendments. Use a planting container that is at least 8” wide and 6” deep. Make holes or slits in the sides of the containers for water circulation and line with newspaper so that soil doesn’t wash away. Alternately, if planting directly in pond substrate, wrap the root ball in burlap and tie with biodegradable twine.

**Light Requirements:** Hardy Water Lilies require a minimum of 6 hours of direct sun each day to bloom regularly.

**Placement:** Hardy Water Lilies need their crowns to always be below the water surface and slightly above the soil. Keep the leaves and stems wet at all times. For better growth, submerge a minimum of 18” and not more than 3’ (although they can sometimes grow at depths up to 10’). Be sure plants are below the freeze line during the winter. They prefer slow moving or stagnant water and do not tolerate salt.

**Fertilizer:** Hardy Water Lilies are dormant during the winter. They will put up their first floating leaves when the water temperature reaches 60°F. If the water lily is planted in a container, it will need fertilizer added every 3-4 weeks once the plant has several floating leaves. Stop fertilizing when the plant starts going dormant. We recommend Jobe’s Organic Fertilizer Spikes 4-4-4. Push the spike into the soil approximately 1” away from the water lily crown. Completely cover the inserted spike with soil.

**Regular Maintenance:** Remove yellowing leaves and old flowers to encourage new growth. Flowers usually last for 3-4 days.

**Walker Avenue Nursery** is an independent, family-owned nursery located on 6.5 acres in Sonoma County. The land has been dedicated as part of a water reclamation project that recycles water from the City of Santa Rosa. Our plants are grown entirely on reclaimed water and free of synthetic pesticides and fertilizer