

Lotus Care

Its likeness is often captured in ancient Egyptian or Hindu art and it is the national flower of India. To the country's people, the lotus flower signifies purity and peace, a representation of the Manifestation of God.

To grow these lovely water flowers in San Diego remember that the best soil is a heavy clay loam that will anchor the tuber as it develops. A light layer of gravel is recommended except where the growing tips are. Care must be taken to avoid obstructing the new growth. The tubers grow vigorously and have brittle growing tips. If these tips are broken, the plant will die. Never plant them in a square container. A round pot or bowl lets the roots grow unimpeded. After planting, the lotus should be placed in water four to 10 inches over the soil surface. Once the lotus is established, it will grow well with 12"-18" of water over the soil year round.

Planting in soil bottom or natural ponds is not recommended due to the invasive nature of the lotus. Spreading roots may travel 30 feet or more in a single season!

After planting, wait until a new leaf is floating on the surface before fertilizing. Using fertilizer tablets, place two or three near the origin or the new growth the first time the plant is fed. Wait about four weeks and feed again at the recommended rate on the label of the fertilizer. Feed every six to eight weeks until August to encourage large leaves and flowers.

In winter, wait until the plant has gone dormant before trimming the dead leaves. The lotus will remain dormant until after most other aquatic plants are growing. It may not be until mid April before the first leaf spikes emerge from the soil and grow to the surface, forming floating leaves once again.