

# Sacred Lotus Flower

*Nelumbo nucifera*

*Nelumbo nucifera*, commonly known as sacred or pink lotus flower, is a highly aggressive and invasive plant found mainly in ponds and other stagnant waterways in several counties in Ohio. The sacred lotus is thought to have been introduced to the Butler county area within the last 10 years. It is a common aquarium plant used in backyard ponds and indoor containers, but has escaped captivity and is now taking over many ponds in the area.

It is important to note that we do have a native lotus flower, *Nelumbo lutea*. It is easily distinguished from the invasive lotus due to its yellow blooms, as opposed to the invasive species which always has pink blooms. This plant is also easily confused with the non-native water lily (*Nymphaea spp.*) which is not considered invasive in our region.

## Identification

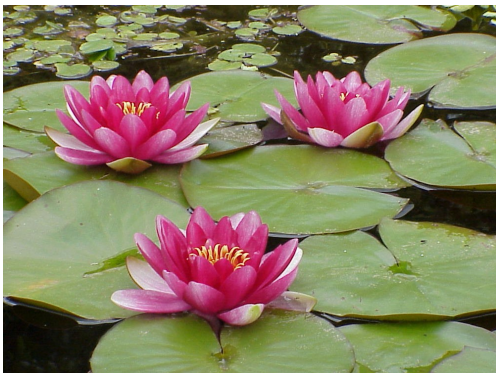
### Native Lotus



### Invasive Lotus



### Water Lilies



The best way to quickly tell if what you're looking at is a water lily or a lotus flower is by looking at the leaves. Water lilies will always have a distinctive slit while the lotuses are whole.

## More Identifying Characteristics



lotus



water lily

On the left are lotus leaves and on the right are water lily leaves. Notice the slit in the water lily leaves compared to the lotus leaves which are whole. Another noticeable difference is that lotus leaves will mostly be suspended above the water with a few on the surface, while water lily leaves are practically all on the surface. If you see a pink flower in your pond, make sure to check the leaves!



If you happen to be looking in your pond in autumn, lotus flowers turn into these distinctive seed pods.

Unfortunately there isn't a sure way of telling the two lotus seed pods apart, but if you see them make sure to check back in Summer to see which color the blooms are.

## Control

**Mechanical:** Very small populations can be controlled by pulling. The best method is to use a rake to pull up the rhizomatous root systems to ensure the plant is fully removed. Physical removal should be completed before the flowering and seed set if possible.

**Chemical:** Aquatic approved herbicides may control populations. Contact Butler SWCD for specific herbicide recommendations, and always make sure to follow the label— **it's the law!**

**Biological:** None to date.