

American Lotus | *Nelumbo lutea*



Mixed stand of American lotus, water lily, and other species. Round American lotus leaves are floating on the surface and emergent.



American lotus seed pod.



Round American lotus leaf showing the central stem insert, radiating veins, and lack of notch.

American lotus is found throughout Mississippi and is easily recognizable by its large, round leaves with central stem insertion, large, yellow single flower, and unmistakable seed pod.

Leaf stems extend to the pond or lake bottom, where the plant is rooted in the sediment and has rhizomes that store nutrients.

Leaves can reach diameters of 2.5 feet or more and may float on the water surface. Some leaves may emerge several feet above the water, which is referred to as umbrella pads. Flowers can be as wide as 10 inches.

The seed pod, or receptacle, is **shaped like an inverted cone and contains acorn-like seeds** within individual cavities.

Management Value

American lotus is a native plant, and its seeds are eaten by some species of waterfowl and possibly other wildlife. The rhizomes are eaten by beavers and muskrats, while the leaves and stalks provide habitat for fish. In small quantities, it is part of a healthy pond ecosystem, although it is highly invasive and usually takes over shallow ponds. American lotus is not recommended for pond management.

American lotus roots, leaves, and seeds are edible. Native Americans were known to eat the starchy rhizomes, and young leaves can be cooked and eaten like spinach. Immature seeds can be eaten raw, and the seed pods are commonly used in floral arrangements.

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Recommended Controls

Option 1: 2, 4-D (3.8-pound formulation). For each gallon, mix 5.1 ounces of 2,4-D, 1.3 ounces of surfactant, and the rest water. Spray to wet all exposed plants. Do not exceed annual herbicide rate limits as stated on the product label.

Option 2: Diquat (3.73-pound formulation). Diquat should be applied as a submersed injection (0.25 gallons per acre-foot of water, or about 1.5 gallons per surface acre for most Mississippi ponds).

Acre-feet = the average depth of pond multiplied by pond acreage. Most Mississippi ponds average 5–6 acre-feet per surface acre.

Option 3: Triclopyr (3.0-pound formulation). For each gallon, mix 5.1 ounces of triclopyr, 1.3 ounces of surfactant, and water. Spray to wet all exposed plants. Do not exceed annual herbicide rate limits as stated on the product label.

For heavy coverage, treat one-third of pond at a time with 1–2 weeks between applications for both Options 1 and 2.

Southeastern Aquatic Plants | Identification, Control, and Establishment

■ **Read and follow all chemical label instructions, especially the section on the use of personal protection equipment.**

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