



Utah Water Garden & Koi Club

July Newsletter

Hello friends, and welcome!

We hope July has found you happy, safe, healthy and enjoying the beauties of summer and your water gardens. With the extra time many of us have had at home, we hope your ponds and water features are looking great!

Many of us have smaller ponds, or want to make a modest start into water gardening with patio features. Others of us have larger ponds which are filled to capacity with lilies, fish, and other garden plants. We long to try new things, but have no more room (and possibly a partner who doesn't appreciate our desire to dig yet another pond).

So – what to do??

This edition of our newsletter is devoted to **going small**. We will examine small, commercially available water lilies which will fit into a patio container, or only take up a couple feet of your valuable pond space. We will learn about the world's smallest water lily (*so cool!*) and where it was found. We will highlight a small, floating alternative (*nymphoides peltate*) to the potted water lilies, which looks lovely in smaller (or larger) ponds and which also provides shade and temperature control for your water. This is the perfect summer to experiment.

Ready? Read on!





Pygmy Water Lilies

Most moderately sized water lilies will spread about four to seven feet in the pond by the end of our growing season. Larger ones (the Aussies and some tropicals) can expand to eight or even ten feet when planted three or four feet deep and given a long growing season. Not to mention the Victoria water lily, which can spread out to forty feet or more in its native Amazon River habitat, and grow pads up to eight feet in diameter.

But did you know there are beautiful water lilies which need only three feet or less to form a clump of twelve or more leaves and flower? In some cases, the entire lily (all of the pads and the flowers) will take up less than eighteen inches of space. And most of these tiny lilies will overwinter just as their larger sister varieties. Almost anyone can spare a couple of feet of pond space to try growing one of these beauties. It's fun!

Before we get to some specific varieties to try, there are several things to remember:

Shallow water is ideal. Most water lilies are planted two to four feet deep. Pygmy's only need six to twelve inches of water between the top of the lily pot and the water's surface. This makes them ideal for a plant shelf, or for the shallower part of your pond,

Pygmy lilies are happy in smaller pots. Depending on the variety, a tub twelve to eighteen inches wide should provide plenty of

space for your lily to flourish. (Just like traditional lilies, width is more important than depth. Six inches of soil is plenty.)

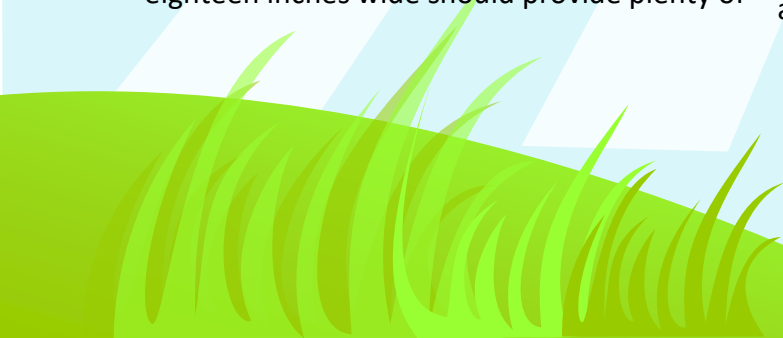
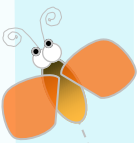
Small doesn't equate with cheap. Pygmy lilies cost just as much, and sometimes more than, traditional lilies. They are more of a niche item and can be a bit more fragile. And they are priced accordingly.

The rate of fertilizer is measured by the gallons of soil in a pot. Fertilize per gallon, just as you would a larger lily. So, on average, less fertilizer will be needed. However, the *rate at which you fertilize* should remain the same – insert one pond tab per gallon about once a month.

Move lilies deeper for winter. Come November, small lilies need to be moved low enough that the tuber will not freeze. If you can move the tub down to about two feet, that is ideal. Eighteen inches probably be fine if need be.

OK. Now to some really fun varieties to try:

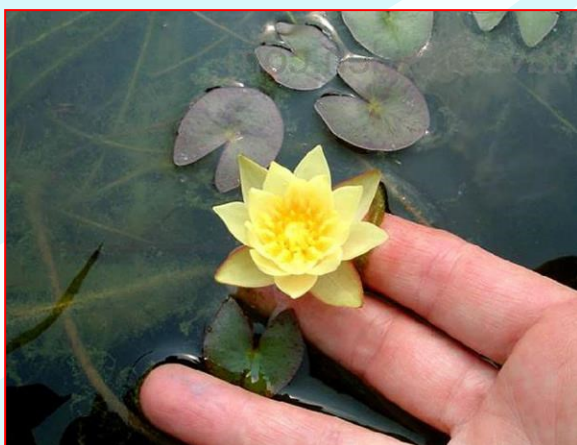
Helvola: This is the smallest water lily which is commercially available. It is also sold under the trade name "yellow pygmy". This lily is a gem – and sized like one as well. The entire spread of this lily will be between one and two feet. Leaves (pads) will only reach around two inches in length. They are somewhat oval, and marked with chocolate colored flecks. Flowers are a pale yellow and no more than two inches





in size. This lily can take a full year to establish, but after that should bloom well all summer. J If you have only a tiny space but want to try something new, this is a great choice. Available over the internet from several pond supply

Perry's Baby Red: This was hybridized by Perry Slocum, famous for his beautiful water lily and lotus varieties. It is on the large side for a pygmy, and will spread to around three feet. It has a lot of presence in a small pond, but will also be fine in a tub or container water garden.



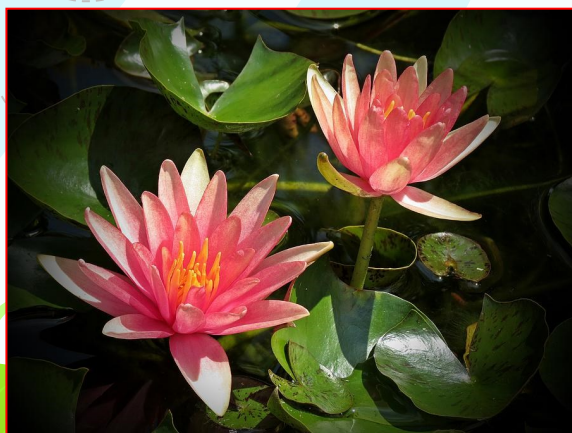
Helvola



Perry's Baby Red

stores, but usually sold out by early June. **Little Sue:** This is a lovely small lily, with two to three inch pink blossoms (large for a pygmy) tinged with yellow. The three to four inch pads are dark green and lightly speckled. They are also quite thick and sturdy for a pygmy, approaching the strength of larger varieties. Spread will be between two and three feet.

Dauben: This German hybrid was produced by Dr. Daubeny in 1863. Not a true pygmy, it can be grown as such if planted in a smaller tub (perhaps two gallons). While it will reach a larger size in tropical climates, our short growing season, combined with a smaller tub, will limit its growth. This one has the palest blue, star shaped flowers held high above the water. The flowers are an ethereal sight. It is a tropical lily, and so unless the tuber is brought inside and over wintered t will need to be replaced each year. It is also interesting in that it is viviparous: the nodes of each leaf (pad) will often form miniature flowers, which if left to



Little Sue





bloom and grow will in turn produce miniature leaves and turn into new tiny plants.



Dauben

Joanne Pring: *Nymphaea* 'Joanne Pring' is a hardy lily with rich rosy-pink blooms only two inches across. Emerging leaves are dark red, turned to green. Excellent bloomer.

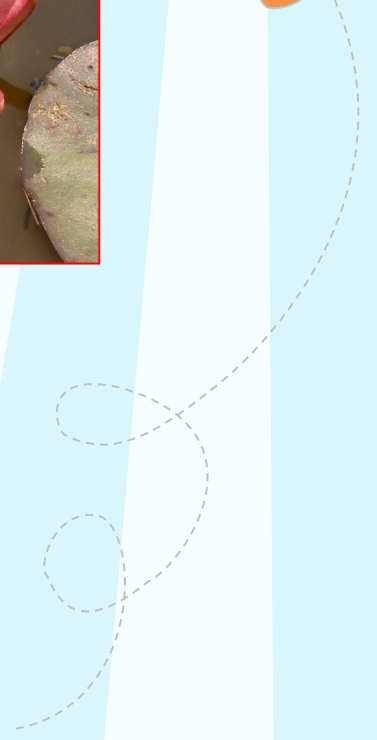
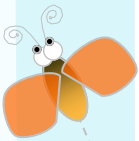


Joanne Pring

Indiana: This lily is a "changeable," meaning that flowers change colors from orange-peach (first day bloom) to a deeper red-orange (third day bloom). Blooms well once established. Spread will be between two and three feet. This one can bloom in partial shade, although it will still need several hours of direct sunlight each day.

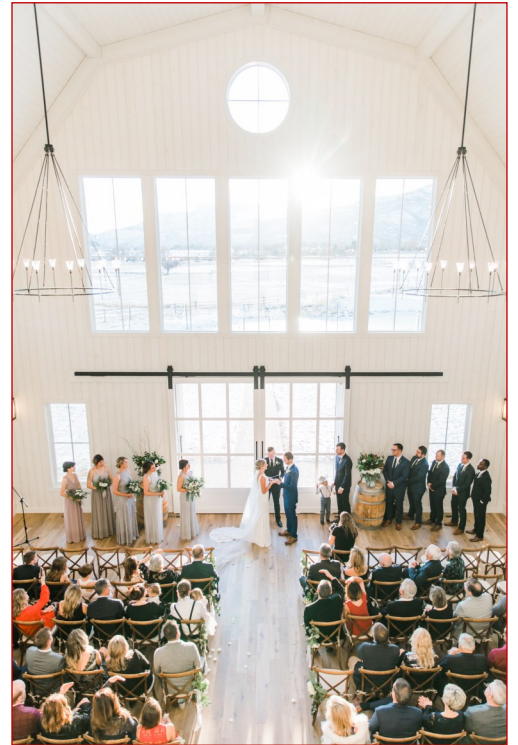


Indiana





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World's Smallest Water Lily

Nymphaea thermarum is the world's smallest water lily. The pads (leaves) can measure only 1 cm (0.4 in) across, less than 10% the width of the next smallest species in the genus *Nymphaea* (although some leaves can reach up to one inch in size).

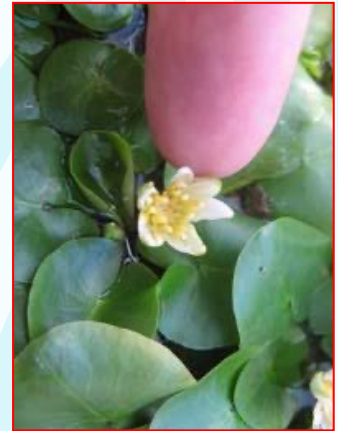
The plant's native habitat was damp mud formed by the overflow of a freshwater hot spring in Rwanda. It became extinct in the wild about 2008 when local farmers began using the spring for agriculture. The farmers cut off the flow of the spring, which dried up the tiny area – just a few square meters – that was the lily's entire habitat. Before the plants became extinct, some specimens were sent to the Bonn Botanic Gardens. Botanists here kept them alive, but could not figure out how to propagate them.



Fully mature lily

Nymphaea species typically germinate well under water. **N. thermarum** seeds are different, needing CO² in order to germinate. Botanists were unable to germinate and of the seeds until Carlos Magdalena, at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, discovered a solution – once he was down to the last 20 seeds in the world. He placed the seeds into pots of loam surrounded by water of the same level in a 25 degree C. environment. Finally one grew and flowered for the first time.

The lily features tiny white flowers, less than one half of an inch wide and an entire flowering plant can take up less than six inches. However, this variety is not commercially available. If you want to see this lily in person, it is time for a road trip to Kew. (Or steal one – someone actually broke into the Princess of Wales observatory at Kew Gardens in 2014 and stole one of these lilies. International police got involved. The individual who stole the plant clearly knew what he was doing. Yes, there is a black market for rare botanical



N. thermarum



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*Designs of
the Heart*



Thank you to our sponsors!





Floating Heart

Another wonderful small-flower addition to any backyard pond is Floating Heart or *Nymphoides Peltata*. It grows easily and helps shade the pond starting early in the spring before larger water lilies sprout their leaves. The bad news is this plant is considered an invasive plant in the U.S.! Apparently, when it gets into wild ponds and lakes in warmer regions, it can spread very quickly and totally blanket the top of the water making it impossible to fish, water ski or boat. It is impossible to kill off, so make sure you really, really want it before you put this plant in your pond.

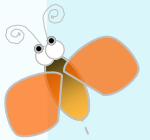


The Avellars have this plant in their pond and they believe it must have been carried in on another pond-plant purchase, as it is growing wild in their pond. It requires thinning throughout the season to keep it in check but it can be easily pulled by hand. It overwinters here in Utah nicely.



Floating Heart forms a veritable floating carpet of foliage and flowers on the surface of the water only, contrasting nicely with other water plants. It also makes a nice substitute for water lilies in small pools and tubs where water lilies would look out of place.

Description of floating heart: The bright yellow flowers of the floating-heart appear quite early





in spring and continue through summer. The blooms are short-lived but plentiful. The rounded, heart-shaped leaves, green mottled maroon, look much like water lily leaves but on a smaller scale, measuring only about 3 inches across. The plant produces a great many offsets, which in turn root and produce further offsets.

Growing Floating Heart: Floating-heart is an accommodating plant and thrives in sun or partial shade. Cover its crown with 4 to 12



inches of water. Don't hesitate to prune it back if it threatens to take over the pool. In colder zones, make sure to sink its pot to the bottom of the pool, as its roots should not be allowed to freeze. This plant will jump out of a pot and root wherever it wants.

Propagating Floating Heart: By division.

Uses for Floating Heart: This plant can be considered a "ground cover" for water gardens, used to set off larger plants marvelously.

Related species of floating heart: Water snowflake (*Nymphoides indica*) is larger, with 8-inch leaves. It bears attractive white scented flowers with fuzzy petals and yellow centers. Yellow snowflake (*N. geminata*) is similar, but its yellow flowers are even more highly fringed. Neither are as hardy as the Floating Heart: They are best grown in USDA zone 7 or above.

Scientific name of Floating

Heart: *Nymphoides peltate*

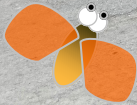


July Meeting



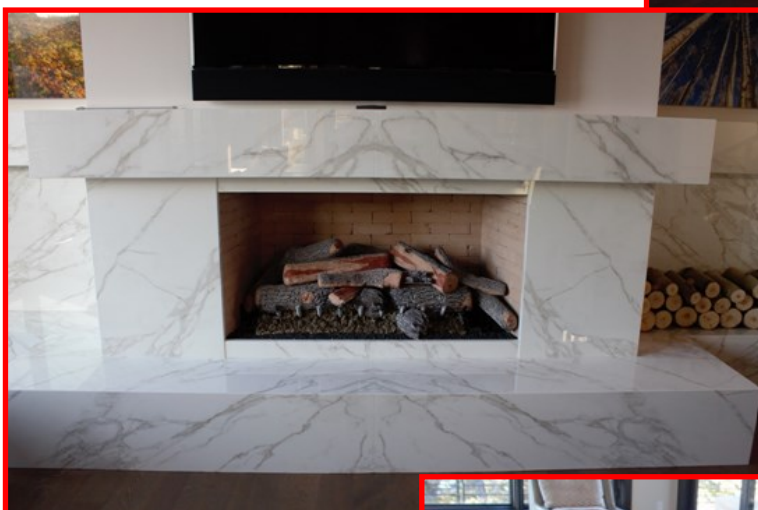
We had a delightful (and socially distant) meeting on July 16 at Utah Water Garden's new location. Thanks for showing us their wonderful facility!





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Who we are

The Utah Water Garden Club is a non-profit organization serving the greater Wasatch Front. We strive to foster an appreciation for and interest in the use of water in the landscape, through monthly meetings, educational programs, an annual pond tour, and sharing our water gardening experiences. We are a group of volunteers dedicated to water gardening, pond keeping, and koi. Our members range from novices to commercial professionals.

Our annual Water Garden Tour is a self-guided tour of out-standing local garden. Due to the current pandemic, we are holding a "virtual" 2020 tour!

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