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Three Pond Plants to Try by Lydia Holley

Claude Monet made water lilies famous with his numerous paintings of them adorning the lake under his Japanese footbridge. The scenes are beautiful, tranquil and mesmerizing. You, too, can have a pond filled with water lilies.



There are numerous water lilies to choose from, many different color choices, perennial as well as annual, night blooming or day blooming. If you are interested in native plants, there is a water lily native to the United States, *Nymphaea odorata*, a large white or pink blooming fragrant beauty whose native range includes southeast Texas.

You may wish to only fill your pond with water lilies, but for a more exotic look, try the lotus. It became the ancient symbol of rebirth because the pure white lotus flower emerges out of the murky water. Unlike the water lily, whose leaves float on the surface of the water, the leaves of the lotus flower rise up above. Lotus flowers that bloom pink are also available.

The American lotus, *Nelumbo lutea*, is native to the United States, including Texas, and blooms yellow. If you have a large area to fill, a pond of lotus flowers would be dramatic in its beauty. The pods left after the plant blooms are interesting, are good dried in arrangements, and are filled with seeds to grow more plants.

If you want a pond plant with contrasting foliage to the round leaves of the water lily or lotus, try pickerel rush, *Pontederia cordata*. Sword-shaped leaves rise above the water with purple-blue spiky blooms. It makes a nice water plant all on its own, but is most beautiful when paired with other plants. Pickerel rush is also native to the United States, and attracts butterflies and bees when in bloom. It increases quickly, so it will need to be divided occasionally.

Ponds are a lovely water feature to have in your garden. The three plants mentioned above are easy to grow and can add years of beauty to your pond garden.

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