

HARYANA

State Flower: Kamal (Hindi).

Botanical Name: *Nelumbo nucifera* Gaertn.

Common Name: Chinese Water Lily, Egyptian Bean, Indian Lotus, Sacred Lotus (English); Ambuj, Kamal, Lalkamal (Hindi); Ambapadam, Amburoha, Amlana, Aravinda, Asyapatra, Bisakusum, Drishopadma, Indriyalaya, Jalajanma, Kamala, Kunja, Mahapadma, Nala, Padma, Pankaja, Sujala, Shuklapadma, Varisoa (Sanskrit).

Family: Nelumbonaceae.

Etymology: The generic name '**Nelumbo**' is derived from Tamil or Sinhalese name, referring to a blue flower; the specific epithet '**nucifera**' means 'nut-bearing' referring to the embedded seed in torus.



Description: An aquatic, perennial herb with thick, stoloniferous rhizomes. Leaves are simple, usually rising above the level of water, peltate, orbicular, ca 50 cm with wavy margins. Petioles and peduncles are fleshy with spongy tissues.

Flowers terminal on solitary scape, fragrant. Petals in many whorls, pink or white. Fruit is a spongy torus containing a few oblong-ovoid seeds.

Flowering & Fruiting: June – October.

Range of Distribution: It is native to India and found throughout the country. It is also distributed from Southeast Asia to tropical Australia.

Economic Importance: The long petioles and peduncles yield a yellowish white fibre, used as wicks of sacred lamps.

Traditional Uses: According to Hindu mythology, the lotus is believed to have originated from the navel of Lord Vishnu and hence considered sacred. It symbolises purity, peace, and non-attachment to desire. The flowers are often used in making garlands and offered to the gods. In different states of India flowers, seeds, young leaves and roots are eaten; mature leaves are used as a wrap for food. Lotus rootlets are often pickled with rice, vinegar, sugar, chilli and garlic and used with salads, prawns, sesame oil and coriander leaves.

Medicinal Uses: Powdered root is prescribed for piles and dysentery, and as a paste used in skin infection and ring worm. The milky viscid juice of the leaf and flower stalks is a remedy in diarrhoea. Flowers are used as cooling, refrigerant, astringent, diuretic and cardio-tonic, and also used to cure haemorrhages. Seeds are used as diuretic, and also form a cooling medicine for skin diseases and leprosy.

Ceremonial Uses: The Civilian awards given by the Government of India in the form of Padma Sri, Padma Bhusan and Padma Vibhusan, have the words 'Padma' ('Lotus') and 'Shri' written in Devanagari script appear above and below an imprint of lotus flower respectively on its observe.

Note: The plant can be propagated through rhizomes.

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