

## JAMMU AND KASHMIR

**State Flower:** Pamposh

**Botanical Name:** *Nelumbo nucifera* Gaertn.

**Common Names:** Chinese Water Lily, Egyptian Bean, Indian Lotus, Sacred Lotus (English); Ambuj, Lalkamal, Kamal, Padam (Hindi); Ambapadam, Amburoha, Amlana, Aravinda, Asyapatra, Bisakusum, Drishopadma, Indriyalaya, Jalajanma, Kamala, Kunja, Mahapadma, Nala, Pankaja, Sujala, Shuklapadma, Varisoha (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 seeds in torus.



***Nelumbo nucifera*** Gaertn.

**Description:** An aquatic, perennial herb with thick, stoloniferous rhizomes. The petioles and peduncles are fleshy with spongy tissues. Leaves are simple, usually rising above level of water, peltate, orbicular with wavy margins, ca 50 cm across. Flowers are terminal on solitary scape, pink or white, fragrant. The scape is larger than petioles. Petals are arranged in many whorls. Fruit is a spongy torus containing a few oblong-obovoid seeds.

**Flowering & Fruiting:** June – October.

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

**Economic Importance:** The long stalks of this plant yield a yellowish white fibre, which is used as wicks of sacred lamps.

**Traditional Uses:** According to Hindu mythology, the lotus is considered 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. Flowers, seeds, young leaves and roots are eaten in many parts of the country; mature leaves are used as a wrap for food. Rootlets are often pickled with rice vinegar, sugar, chili and garlic and used with salads, prawns, sesame oil and coriander leaves.

**Medicinal Uses:** Roots in powder form is prescribed for piles and dysentery. It is also used as a paste in skin infection and ring worm. The leaves are used as cool bed-sheets useful in fever due to heat and burning of skin. The milky viscid juice of the leaf and flower stalks is a remedy in diarrhoea. Flowers are used as cooling, refrigerent and astringent, diuretic and are cardio-tonic and used to cure haemorrhages. Seeds are used to check vomiting, diuretic, form a cooling medicine for skin diseases and leprosy. It is also considered to be an antidote to poisons. The filaments are considered astringent, cooling and are used in burning sensation, bleeding piles and menorrhagia.

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

**Note:** The plant can be propagated through rhizomes.

**Manas Ranjan Debta, Debasmitra Dutta – Pramanick & S.K. Srivastava**

Northern Regional Centre, Botanical Survey of India, Dehra Dun.