

Native
Floating
Aquatic
Plant

AMERICAN WHITE WATER LILY

Nymphaea odorata



About

Many people are familiar with the iconic flower of the American White Water Lily. This species features an eye-catching white, large flower with a yellow center. Its leaves offer buoyant refuge for wildlife, including the ever-so typical frog on a lily pad. This plant is found in slow moving water in depths up to 2 meters deep. Unlike other floating plants, the American White Water Lily is anchored to the bottom of lakes with a large root system.



Identification

- Large, untoothed circular leaves growing up to 15 - 30 cm wide
- Leaves have a waxy, water repellent upper layer
- Leaves are distinguished by a v-shaped slit where the stem is attached
- Leaves are vibrant green in colour on top and have a purple tone underneath
- Flowers grow up to 15 cm in width featuring over 20 white petals with a yellow stamen
- Features a fleshy rhizome, also known as the main stem

References

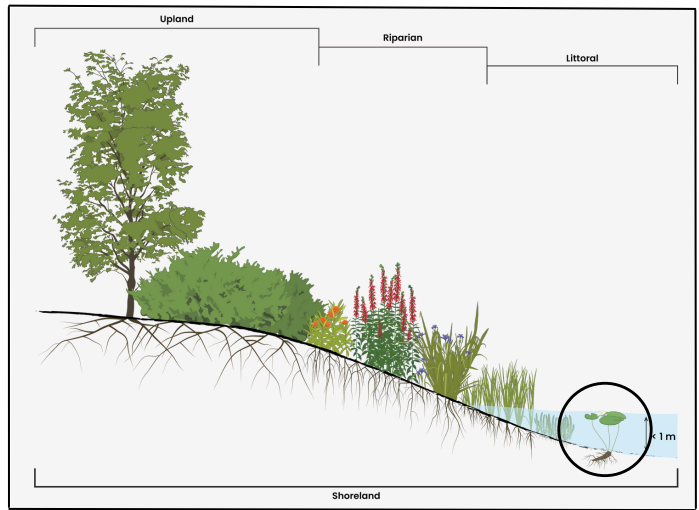
[White Water Lily \(Nymphaea odorata\)](#) produced by U.S. Forest Service

[European frog-bit](#) developed by the Government of Ontario
[European frog-bit: Best Management Practices in Ontario](#) by Ontario Invasive Plant Council

[White Water-lily Nymphaea odorata.ssp.](#) developed by Adirondacks Forever Wild

Where is this species found in the shoreland?

American White Water Lily grows within the littoral zone of the shoreland, as featured on the diagram.



Did you know that American White Water Lily flowers are open for only three days and exclusively during sunlight hours? This strategy is used to attract insect pollinators.



Benefits

- Provides wildlife habitat as wide floating leaves offer refuge for insects such as dragonflies and damselflies
- Food source for:
 - Waterfowl as birds eat its seeds
 - Mammals such as moose that eat the waterlily leaves
- Prevents algae growth by absorbing nutrients
- Maintains water temperature by blocking sunlight and creating shade in water



Don't weed me!

The American White Water Lily is a beneficial species, and should not be misidentified as a weed on shoreland properties. There are always lookalikes, and European frog-bit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*) has a history of being mistaken as the American White Water Lily. A key identifier of this invasive look-alike is the spongy coating covering the bottom of the leaf. European Frog-Bit leaves reach only 5 cm, and its flowers produce three white rounded petals.