

Rare Plants of Louisiana



Nymphaea elegans - blue water lily Water-Lily Family (Nymphaeaceae)

Rarity Rank: S2S4/G4?

	1	2	3	4	5
State		■	■	■	
Global				■	
	imperiled		rare		secure



Photo by T. F. Niehaus, courtesy of Smithsonian Institution

Range: FL, LA, TX

Recognition:

- A classic water lily with floating leaves and aerial flowers
- Flowers tinged with blue, 6 to 12 cm across, flowers mostly raised above surface of water, rather than sitting on the surface.
- Leaves ovate, cleft at base, dark green above, reddish purple underneath, and about 30 cm wide
- Arises from a singular rootstock (vertically oriented underground stem), rather than an elongate horizontal rhizome which characterizes fragrant water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*).

Flowering Time: April to July, though may flower year-round

Light Requirement: Full sun

Wetland Indicator Status: OBL - almost always in wetlands

Habitat:

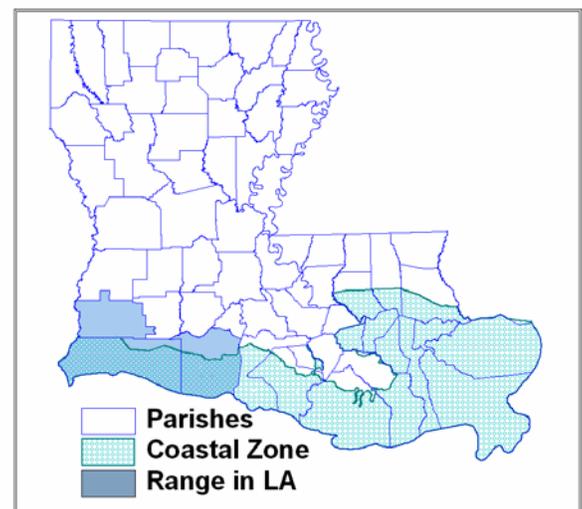
Louisiana occurrences are in pools in freshwater marshes; can grow in water depths up to 1.2 m. Fragrant water lily (*N. odorata*) and yellow water lily (*N. mexicana*) are common associates.

Threats:

Salt water intrusion; intolerant of salinities over 3 ppt

Beneficial Management Practices:

- Protect freshwater marsh habitat from salt water intrusion
- Conduct concentrated survey efforts to accurately determine rarity status in Louisiana



LA River Basins: Vermilion-Teche, Mermentau, Calcasieu, Sabine

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Photo by Alfred Richardson

References:

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USDA, NRCS. 2007. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

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For more information, please visit our Web pages at

<http://www.wlf.la.gov/wildlife/louisiana-natural-heritage-program> or 225-765-2811

www.BTNEP.org or 1-800-259-0869