

# **Suggestions for Repotting Blooming Water Plants**

## **(Lilies and Lotus)**

### **Containers**

Use solid containers with NO HOLES in the bottom. If you want to reuse existing pots, simply line the pot with a garbage bag. Water lilies (and lotus) grow in the composting, rotting muck at the bottom of natural ponds. This muck is a combo of dead plants, dead animals, dead insects, and all the other organic debris that naturally gets into a pond and settles out onto a layer of sediment on the bottom. TONS of micronutrients in this muck too, not to mention beneficial bacteria, and yes, anaerobic bacteria. There are no 'holes' in the bottom of natural ponds. No need for holes in pots either.

Another good aspect to pots without holes is that the nutrients and fertilizer has to seep upwards into the water lily roots (or any pond plant roots) and can not leach out through the bottom holes. This way your water plant gets ALL the nutrition.

If you use pots with holes, the fertilizer (and soil nutrients) leach out and will cause algae blooms (GREEN WATER) in your pond.

Be sure that your container is large enough for your plant. Most lotus plants require a minimum pot diameter of 18" while lilies do fine in a "Dollar Store" dishpan. Plastic totes, livestock feed pans, etc. can be used for lotus pots and are more affordable than "Pots" that size.

Instead of putting that big lotus pot in your pond, try burying it next to your pond. Just make sure to keep it full of water.

### **Compost**

Add a thick layer of compost to bottom of pot. This is the next best thing to natural pond muck! You can buy composted cow manure or make your own compost. If you buy composted cow manure, it should look and smell like high quality compost or a freshly plowed field, aka "good dirt" ...NOT COW POOP!

It should not be moldy, stinky, or sour smelling. If it is, do not use it.

### **Osmocote (or other "timed release" fertilizer)**

Osmocote is a micro-coated fertilizer, using the osmosis process in conjunction with the temperature, the nutrients inside the micro-coated pellet pass through the micro-coat, the warmer the temps, the faster it is released. This corresponds to the lilies (or lotus, or any pond plants) needs for nutrition. As it warms up from spring to summer, your plants grows faster, needs more nutrition...more food. Osmocote can NOT dissolve all at once like fertilizer tabs or spikes can, so it is virtually impossible to burn your plants with Osmocote (unless you don't follow directions and dump WAYYYY too much of it in the pot). There is a chart on each container of Osmocote that tells you how much to use per diameter pot.

By adding Osmocote, you can have at least 4 months of gradually released supplemental nutrition for your pond plants. And you won't get any fertilizer burn. But you will get bigger lilies, more blooms than you've ever had, and have a lot less maintenance!

### **Mosquito Quick Kill granules (or other BT product, Mosquito Dunk, etc.)**

Mix Mosquito Quick Kill granules (it's all natural, uses *Bacillus thuringiensis* aka BT) into the Compost. It inoculates your plants soil with BT, killing the caterpillars that eat your lily leaves, and it will of course kill mosquitoes. Completely fish safe, pet safe, human safe since it uses a bacteria that gets into the bugs digestive system, disrupts it and causes the caterpillars (and mosquito larvae) to starve to death. When mixed into the soil as granules, it seems to last all summer. Make sure that the main ingredient in what ever product you use is *Bacillus thuringiensis*! Other products could harm your fish.

### **Steel wool (optional)**

Placing a small walnut sized wad of plain steel wool on the bottom of the pot keeps plants from getting chlorotic. (yellowing from lack of iron)