

Nelumbo lutea

[Synonyms : *Cyamus luteus*, *Nelumbium codophyllum*, *Nelumbium jamaicense*, *Nelumbium luteum*, *Nelumbo jamaicensis*, *Nelumbo pentapetala*, *Nelumbo reniformis*, *Nymphaea nelumbo*, *Nymphaea pentapetala*]

AMERICAN LOTUS is a deciduous aquatic perennial. Native to south-eastern North America it has large slightly fragrant, yellow centred, pale yellow flowers with many stamens.

It is also known as Alligator buttons, Alligator peas, American nelumbo, *Amerikanische Lotusblume* (German), *Amerikanischer Lotus* (German), Big bonnet, Can-dock, Chinkapin, Chinquapin, Duck acorn, Great yellow water lily, Knock-knocks, Lily nut, Lotus, Lotus lily, Monaca nut, Nelumbo, *Nelumbo flava* (Esperanto), Pond lily, Pondnuts, Rattle nut, Sacred bean, *Tethawe* (Dakota North American Indian), *Tewape* (Omaha and Ponca North American Indian), *Tsherop* (Winnebago North American Indian), *Tukawiu* (Pawnee North American Indian), Wankapin, Water bean, Water chinkapin, Water chinquapin, Water nut, Water shield, Wonkapin, Yankapin, Yanquapin, Yellow lotus, Yellow nelumbo, Yellow water lily, and Yonkapin bonnet.

Lutea means 'deep yellow' with reference to the flower.

Local North American Indian tribes ate the seeds. The Potawatomi ate them like chestnuts (*Castanea*), freshly roasted – others such as some of the Chippewa Indians made the roasted seeds into a meal. The Meskwaki cooked them as a vegetable, and the Omaha, Ponca, Dakota Pawnee and Winnebago all made them into soup. Underground stems or roots provided food for the Comanche, Ponca, Pawnee and Winnebago Indians, and the Dakota and Omaha tribes peeled and cooked these as a vegetable. Both were often added to meat dishes. Some of the Chippewa cooked the shoots as a vegetable, and while the Huron Indians ate the roots only (with acorns), records indicate that in times of famine the Potawatomi stored roots for Winter food and some of the Chippewa Indians and the Meskwaki tribe both dried the terminal shoots for eating during the Winter.

For the Pawnee, Winnebago, Ponca, Omaha and Dakota North American tribes the plant held mystic powers that were reflected in their ceremonial ritual.

The cone-like fruits when gilded have been sold by florists for decoration.