

# Mexican water lily

## *Nymphaea mexicana*

### Family

Nymphaeaceae (water lily)

### Also known as

Mexican lily, banana water lily

### Where is it originally from?

Mexico and southern USA

### What does it look like?

Bottom-rooted aquatic plant, similar to other water lilies, with vertical underwater rhizomes and round heart-shaped floating leaves (<25cm diameter) on long stalks. Mature leaves have brown blotches on the upper surface and are mainly purple beneath. Fleshy stems (stolons) bear banana-shaped tubers. Star-shaped flowers (15 cm across) are pale-yellow with many veined petals and produce seed (2-3 mm long).

### Are there any similar species?

Distinguished from true water lilies by its vertical rhizome and presence of banana-shaped tubers on the fleshy stem. Cleft in the leaf (which creates the heart shape), is greater than 10% of leaf length, and the main vein protrudes on the underside of the leaf.

### Why is it weedy?

Grows rapidly, covering infested waterbodies.

### How does it spread?

Rhizomes, tubers and seeds are carried by water, and fragments can be spread by boats, fishing gear or machinery, or by planting.

### What damage does it do?

Forms dense mats of floating leaves over large areas, clogging waterways, shading out other plants and obstructing recreational water users.

### Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Still freshwater: ponds, still parts of streams.

### What can I do to get rid of it?

Contact your regional council to determine the status of this species and responsibility for control and/or advice on control.



[www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz)



Photo: NIWA



Photo: Trevor James



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