

"Just Add Water"

Articles and Photos by Soni Forsman



Nymphaea 'Helvola'

Small size; BIG presence in container water garden

Nymphaea 'Helvola' is a very small hardy waterlily. When compared to other waterlilies described as small it is miniature. Its size makes it a perfect choice for a container water garden. The dainty cup-shaped yellow flowers measure one-to-two inches in diameter, about the size of a half-dollar piece. The buds poke up through an abundance of green pads that are garnished with maroon mottling. The flowers float on the water's surface and bloom for three days. This variety opens later in the morning than most hardy ones. Mine opens 11 a.m. to noon and closes between four and five in the afternoon.

It prefers full sun - six hours or more - for maximum flowering. But, it will bloom with less - three to four hours of direct sun over the noon hour. Flowering begins in early June and continues into September.

N. 'Helvola' has been decorating water gardens for almost 140 years. This petite waterlily was created in 1879 by French horticulturist Joseph Bory Latour-Marliac. As new waterlily hybrids come on the market, sometimes the great older ones give way to the supposed 'newer and better.' This one has retained widespread popularity.

I don't think there is a better small water lily for a container water garden than *N. 'Helvola.'* It is free flowering especially after the first season and is very hardy when wintered in water in a dark frost-free location. It is a must have for a container water garden.

