



DISCOVER THE HIDDEN LOTUSES

The lotus, or 蓮花 (lián huā), is a cherished summer symbol in Chinese culture. Its bloom, rising pure and elegant from the mud, represents purity and a scholarly spirit.

The Song dynasty (960-1279) scholar Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-1073) praised it as the “gentleman of all flowers,” admiring how it remains unstained despite its muddy roots. This image of growth and integrity has inspired generations of scholars.

For centuries, the lotus has been valued not only for its beauty, but also its uses! From steaming rice in lotus leaves to the crunchy lotus root popular in Southern China, and the sweet lotus seed paste that fills mooncakes and pastries, adding a delicious touch to traditional treats!

Discover the hidden lotuses of Lan Su below!



Lotus Lookalike! But Not Quite...

They are water lilies (*Nymphaea* sp.) Unlike lotuses, these water plants have heart-shaped leaves that rest flat on the water's surface. In Chinese, they are called “the sleeping lotus” because the flowers open in the morning and close at night!



Now This Is a Lotus!

Another way to tell lotuses and water lilies apart is by looking at their stems. The stem and bloom of our lotus (*Nelumbo* sp.) grow tall above the water, while the bloom of waterlilies floats atop the water's surface. Keep in mind, the lotus may be in a different stage of growth than the picture shown here, so you might need to visit the garden again to catch it in full bloom!

LAN SU DISCOVERY GUIDE

Summer 2025



** flip to the other side to learn about Discover the Hidden Lotuses!*



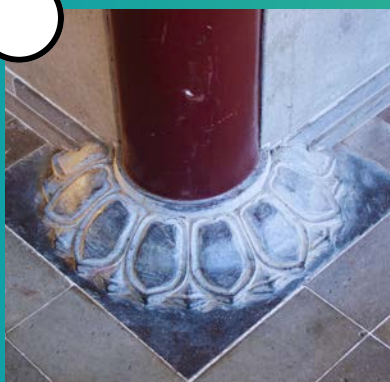
Lotus in Stone

Here are the lotuses at Lan Su that you can enjoy all year long! This lotus mosaic, along with many others in the garden, was hand-paved by a group of Chinese artisans from our sister city, Suzhou.



A Must for Scholars' Desks

Check out this lotus-shaped incense burner! Chinese incense culture dates back to the Han dynasty (206 BC). Scholars believed burning incense, like sandalwood and agarwood, helped with studying and memory.



The Blooming Columns

These are called "column bases," or zhù chǔ 柱础. Lotus column bases were especially loved by Chinese scholars for their homes during the Ming and Qing dynasties when the craftsmanship of these bases reached new heights!



Rooted in Poetry

Can you spot this? (Hint: look for it in our Entrance Plaza.) This is the Chinese character "藕" (ǒu) for "lotus root". The couplet reads, "Perfume of lotus (root) flowers stirs the autumn over half the lake".



Dried Lotus Seed Pods

Creating a floral arrangement? Dried or fresh lotus pods can be used to add height, texture, and drama to floral arrangements, especially contemporary designs! They pair well with other dried flowers and grasses.



Symbolic Elegance in Carving

Lotus motifs hold significant importance in Chinese wood carving and architecture, symbolizing purity, elegance, and spiritual enlightenment. In Chinese wood carving, lotus designs are intricately crafted into furniture, panels, and decorative elements!