

## WATER SNOWFLAKE LILY, NYMPHOIDES INDICA



The Water Snowflake Lily flower is delicately beautiful

The Water Snowflake or Banana Lilly is a tropical ornamental pond plant. Its' flower is only about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches in diameter with bright white feathery petals which are star-shaped and stunning. It is related to the Banana Plant and reproduces mostly by rhizomes, although plantlets can form at the leaves. The bright green floating heart-shaped leaves are 2-8 inches in diameter and are on stems up to 2 meters long. In nature it grows in shallow muddy water. It is widely sold for the water garden trade but has become a weed plant in Florida. It is excellent for container gardens and small ponds. It likes full sun or partial shade. The small, beautiful flowers only last about one day, but several flower stems grow from underneath each leaf base. The young leaves, stems, flower buds, and fruits can be cooked, boiled, or curried and are edible.

I purchased a plant of the Water Snowflake last fall at a SWAMAS auction. Since I don't have an outdoor pond, it was decided to pot it in a 70 gallon planted tank. There is a 2-bulb shoplight over the tank which is on about 12 hours per day. About  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of potting soil with aquarium gravel over it in a pint container was all that was used. After 5 or 6 months, it began to bloom. *Nymphoides indica* is a delightful plant to cultivate and get to bloom, although it would be much easier in an outdoor pond!