Nymphaea elegans - blue water lily
Water-Lily Family (Nymphaeaceae)

**Rarity Rank**: S2S4/G4?

**Range**: FL, LA, TX

**Recognition**:
- A classic water lily with floating leaves and aerial flowers
- Flowers tinged with blue, 6 to 12 cm across, flowers mostly raised above surface of water, rather than sitting on the surface.
- Leaves ovate, cleft at base, dark green above, reddish purple underneath, and about 30 cm wide
- Arises from a singular rootstock (vertically oriented underground stem), rather than an elongate horizontal rhizome which characterizes fragrant water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*).

**Flowering Time**: April to July, though may flower year-round

**Light Requirement**: Full sun

**Wetland Indicator Status**: OBL - almost always in wetlands

**Habitat**: Louisiana occurrences are in pools in freshwater marshes; can grow in water depths up to 1.2 m. Fragrant water lily (*N. odorata*) and yellow water lily (*N. mexicana*) are common associates.

**Threats**: Salt water intrusion; intolerant of salinities over 3 ppt

**Beneficial Management Practices**:
- Protect freshwater marsh habitat from salt water intrusion
- Conduct concentrated survey efforts to accurately determine rarity status in Louisiana

**LA River Basins**: Vermilion-Teche, Mermentau, Calcasieu, Sabine

Photo by T. F. Niehaus, courtesy of Smithsonian Institution
**References:**
