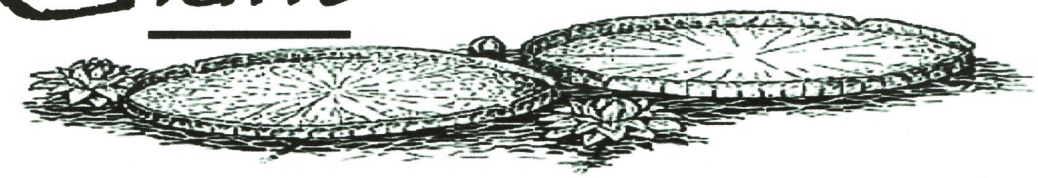
Giant



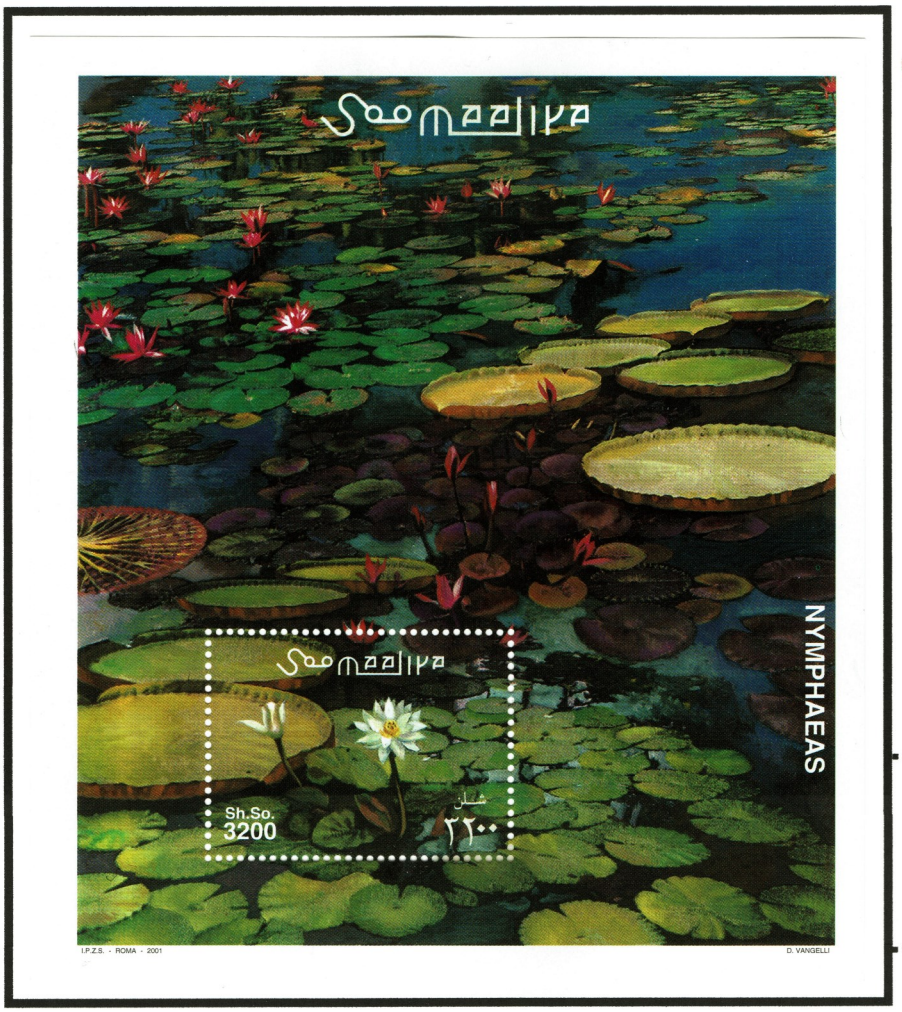
Jan. 24,1980. Mauritius. Pamplemousses Botanical Garden, the oldest botanical garden in the Southern Hemisphere, is famous for its pond of giant waterlilies.

Oct. 29, 1971. Hungary. One in a series of 8 celebrating the bicentennial of the Budapest Botanical Gardens. There are 3 species in the Giant Waterlily group and this stamp features one - *Nymphaea gigantea*.

They were discovered in 1801, in the Amazon, and initially named *Victoria regia* in honour of the Queen of England. However, its scientific name was later changed to *Victoria amazonia*, referencing their origin.

1965 Hungary. The last in a series of 10 flower stamps. It clearly shows the leaf, flower bud and open flower of *Victoria amazonia*.

When its flowers open in the morning they are white, female flowers with a pineapple scent. They close at night and surprisingly when they re-open on the second day the flower colour has changed to pink and the sex of the flower has become male. This "trick" allows the female flower to be fertilized and produce seeds while the male flower produces pollen to fertilize other waterlily female flowers.



Dec. 21, 2001. Somalia Souvenir Sheet. One in a series of 5 stamps that depict Somali aquatic plants. If you look closely you will see the underside of a giant waterlily leaf, showing the structural veining.

Dec. 1, 1954. British Guyana. This stamp features the Giant Waterlily and the Jacanas - a tropical wading bird noted for their elongated toenails that allow them to spread out their weight while foraging on floating or semi-emergent aquatic vegetation.