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POSTAL NEWS

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Half a Billion Water Lilies in Full Bloom at Nation's Post Offices Today

Stunning Macro Photography Captures Floral Beauty on Forever Stamps

High-resolution images of the stamps are available for media use only by emailing: mark.r.saunders@usps.gov

CLEVELAND, OH — Spectacular photographs celebrate the beauty and elegance of water lilies with four new Forever stamps available nationwide today. The Water Lilies Forever stamps were dedicated at the [Garfield-Perry March Party Stamp Show](#) in Cleveland.

Art director Phil Jordan of Falls Church, VA, selected the images taken by Alexandria, VA-based photographer [Cindy Dyer](#) at the [Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens](#) in Washington, DC. Each stamp depicts a close-up of the flower of one of four classic garden water lilies.

"It is truly a distinct honor to have an example of my passion appear on these Forever stamps — a feeling I will savor forever," said Dyer, who became entranced with garden photography more than a decade ago. "It was simply mind-boggling to learn the Postal Service printed 500 million of these stamps."

The Postal Service typically prints between 20 million and 40 million stamps of [a typicalan individual](#) subject. Half a billion Water Lilies Forever stamps were printed in anticipation of extreme customer demand.

Getting the Shots

Using a tripod, Dyer captured the images on a hot overcast July day using a Nikon D300 with a 105mm Nikkor 2.8 macro (close-up) lens. She set her exposure at f8 and 1/125th of a second with an ISO of 400.

"I used a handheld translucent diffuser (a piece of fabric stretched out on a frame) to eliminate harsh shadows and allow for a deep, even saturated color along with a remote shutter release to eliminate vibration," Dyer said.

Visit this [link](#) for Dyer's tips on garden photography.

The Flora

The appreciation for the beauty of water lilies has a long history. The plants take their botanical name, *Nymphaea*, from the nymphs, nature deities from Greek mythology. Water lilies are featured often in the art of the Maya, an ancient Mesoamerican culture. Some of the most well-known paintings of French impressionist Claude Monet were of water lilies; the artist dedicated the last decades of his life to capturing the beauty of the lily pond on his estate in Giverny, France.

Water lilies are aquatic herbs that live in both temperate and tropical climates around the world. Found in still freshwater habitats, most of the more than 50 species of the water lily family (*Nymphaeaceae*) have round waxy leaves that float on the surface. They are attached to long stalks that rise from thick underwater stems.

The flowers of the hardy water lily sit at or slightly above the water's surface; the flowers of tropical water lilies, which produce more blossoms each season than the hardy variety, are held aloft on stems several inches from the surface.

Although delicate looking, the flowers are tough and hardy. They grow well in water gardens in much of the U.S. Tropical water lilies, which require water temperatures above 70 degrees, have a more limited range, but the flowers are larger and more vibrantly colored. Water lilies bloom in the U.S. from spring to fall. Many water lilies bloom only during the day, but there are several night bloomers whose flowers open in the late afternoon and close at morning's light.

Customers may purchase the stamps at [usps.com/stamps](#), the [Postal Store](#), at 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724) and at Post Offices nationwide or visit [ebay.com/stamps](#) to shop for a wide variety of postage stamps and collectibles.

Ordering First-Day-of-Issue Postmarks

Customers have 60 days to obtain first-day-of-issue postmarks by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at [usps.com/shop](#), or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others, and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Water Lilies Stamps
Marketing
2200 Orange Avenue, Room 206
Cleveland, OH 44101-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark up to a quantity of 50. For more than 50, customers are charged 5 cents each. All orders must be postmarked by May 19, 2015.

Ordering First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog, online at [usps.com/shop](#) or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service
Catalog Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

Six philatelic products are available.



689906, [Press Sheet with Die cut](#), \$117.60 (print quantity 250).
689908, [Press Sheet without Die cut](#), \$117.60 (print quantity 1,000).



689910, [Digital Color Postmark Keepsake](#) (set of 4), \$16.95.



689916, [First-Day Cover](#) (set of 4), \$3.72.



689921, [Digital Color Postmark](#) (set of 4), \$6.56.
689931, Stamp Deck Card, \$0.95.

Many of this year's other stamps may be viewed on Facebook at facebook.com/USPSStamps, via Twitter [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps).

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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