

## Macao Lotus

Macao is one of the two Special Administrative Regions in southern China, a city with a population of more than 600,000 in an area of about 32 square kilometers. Before Macao's land reclamation, it was titled with "the Land of Treasure Lotus" as its landform looked like a budding lotus. The blooming lotus was employed in the regional flag and regional emblem of the Macao SAR, even currency and landmarks. It can be seen that Macao is deeply tied with lotus, which also shows that Macao people have the eyes on lotus.

During every midsummer, the season of lotus, "National Lotus Flowers Exhibition" and "Macao Lotus Flower Festival" are held in Mainland China and Macao in June respectively. This year, to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the bid to the host of "National Lotus Flowers Exhibition" went to Macao for the third time, and Macao will co-organize "The 33<sup>rd</sup> National Lotus Flowers Exhibition and the 19<sup>th</sup> Macao Lotus Flower Festival" in the theme of "The Scent of Lotus Perfumes Macao for Two Decades" from 3 June to 16 June with the China Flower Association. In addition to the large-scale flower exhibition and many wonderful activities related to lotus, there are also 25 featured lotus flower exhibition areas of different provinces and cities of China, bringing the rich local customs and practices to the event. The theme lotus flower of this year is the *Nelumbo nucifera* cv. 'Haojiang Qing', the forth lotus flower species named after Macao's nickname "Hou Kong", which is a new variety cultivated by the China Lotus Research Center to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Macao Special Administrative Region. It was awarded "Gold Medal" in the new lotus flower species competition of the 32<sup>nd</sup> National Lotus Flowers Exhibition. *Nelumbo nucifera* cv. 'Haojiang Qing' is a big scale form lotus with double petals which blooms in light yellow initially and turns into white later with high flower density.

The three lotus species named after Macao exhibited in the past are:

- The theme flower of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> Macao Lotus Flower Festival – *Nelumbo nucifera* cv. 'Haojiang Yue'

*Nelumbo nucifera* cv. 'Haojiang Yue' was cultivated by the Lotus Branch of China Flower Association to celebrate the return of Macao in 1999. It belonged to the small-to-medium white lotus species and had a long flowering period, which grew like a bowl in pure white with high flower density.

- The theme flower of the 10<sup>th</sup> Macao Lotus Flower Festival – *Nelumbo nucifera* cv. 'Haojiang Hong'

*Nelumbo nucifera* cv. 'Haojiang Hong' was cultivated by the Lotus Branch of China Flower Association to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Macao Lotus Flower Festival. The flower color of *Nelumbo nucifera* cv. 'Haojiang Hong' was white with fuchsia, making it elegant and beautiful.

- The theme flower of the 17<sup>th</sup> Macao Lotus Flower Festival – *Nelumbo nucifera*

cv. 'Haojiang Bi bo'

*Nelumbo nucifera* cv. 'Haojiang Bi bo' was a new strain of lotus cultivated specially by the Chinese Lotus Research Centre to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Macao Special Administrative Region in 2009. It was a big scale form lotus with single petal and high flower density in white which grew like a bowl. It bloomed earlier than other lotus species and it had a long flowering period.

With the stamp issue of "Macao Lotus", the public can appreciate and cherish the "beauty" and "meaning" of lotus together to promote the idea of ecology and nature conservation.

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