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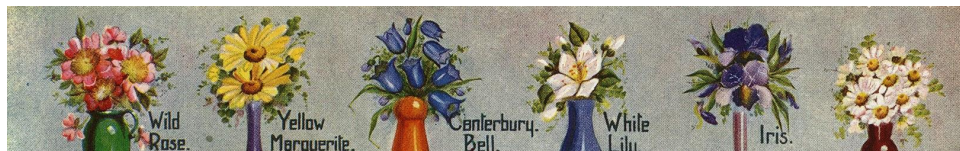
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Flower Meanings: The Language of Flowers



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What Does Each Flower Symbolize?

July 27, 2022

Know the language of flowers! Which flowers represent love, hope, healing, loss, and good luck? See the Almanac's complete list of **Flower Meanings**. Whether you are picking out a flowers for a holiday gift, a wedding bouquet, or even a garden, reference the language of flowers where each flower has hidden meanings.

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The History of Flower Meanings

Egyptians, and Chinese are peppered with flower and plant symbolism—and for good reason.

Whether you're giving flowers to a mother for [Mother's Day](#) or a friend on their birthday or a beloved on Valentine's Day, nearly every sentiment imaginable can be expressed with flowers. The orange blossom, for instance, means chastity, purity, and loveliness, while the red chrysanthemum means "I love you."

Flowery Language of the Victorian Era

Learning the special symbolism of flowers became a popular pastime during the 1800s. Nearly all Victorian homes had, alongside the Bible, guidebooks for deciphering the "language," although definitions shifted depending on the source.

Following the protocol of [Victorian-era etiquette](#), flowers were primarily used to deliver messages that couldn't be spoken aloud. In a sort of silent dialogue, flowers could be used to answer “yes” or “no” questions. A “yes” answer came in the form of flowers handed over with the right hand; if the left hand was used, the answer was “no.”

Plants could also express aversive feelings, such as the “conceit” of pomegranate or the “bitterness” of [aloe](#). Similarly, if given a rose declaring “devotion” or an apple blossom showing “preference,” one might return to the suitor a yellow carnation to express “disdain.”



were given upside down, when the idea being conveyed was the opposite of what was traditionally meant. How the ribbon was tied said something, too: Tied to the left, the flowers' symbolism applied to the giver, whereas tied to the right, the sentiment was in reference to the recipient. And, of course, a wilted bouquet delivered an obvious message!

More examples of plants and their associated human qualities during the Victorian era include bluebells and kindness, [peonies](#) and bashfulness, [rosemary](#) and remembrance, and [tulips](#) and passion. The meanings and traditions associated with flowers have certainly changed over time, and different cultures assign varying ideas to the same species, but the fascination with “perfumed words” persists just the same.

What Does Each Flower Mean?

See our list below for meanings of herbs, flowers, and other plants. (Please note: Our chart below reflects mainly Victorian flower language.)

Click on linked plant names for a photo and growing guide.

Meanings of Herbs, Flowers and Other Plants	
Abatina	Fickleness
Acanthus	The fine art, Artifice
<u>Aloe</u>	Affection, also Grief
<u>Amaryllis</u>	Pride
Anemone	Forsaken

<u>Apple blossom</u>	Preference
<u>Arborvitae</u>	Unchanging friendship
<u>Aster</u>	Symbol of Love, Daintiness
Bachelor's button	Single blessedness
<u>Basil</u>	Good wishes

Bay tree	Glory
Begonia	Beware
Belledonna	Silence
Bittersweet	Truth
<u>Black-eyed Susan</u>	Justice
Bluebell	Humility
Borage	Bluntness, Directness
<u>Butterfly weed</u>	Let me go



Camellia, pink	Longing For You
Camellia, red	You're a Flame in My Heart
Camellia, white	You're Adorable
Candytuft	Indifference
<u>Carnation</u>	Fascination, female love, mother's love

- Red carnation	Alas for my poor heart, my heart aches, deep love
- White carnation	Innocence, pure love, sweet love
- Pink carnation	I'll never forget you
- Striped	Refusal
- Yellow carnation	Disdain, Disappointment, Rejection
Chamomile	Patience in adversity
<u>Chives</u>	Usefulness
<u>Chrysanthemum</u> , red	I love you



Chrysanthemum, white	Truth
<u>Clematis</u>	Mental beauty
Clematis, evergreen	Poverty
<u>Clover</u> , white	Think of me
<u>Columbine</u>	Foolishness, folly

- Columbine, purple	Resolution
- Columbine, red	Anxious, Trembling
<u>Coreopsis</u>	Always cheerful
<u>Coriander</u>	Hidden worth/merit
Crab blossom	Ill nature
<u>Crocus</u> , spring	Cheerfulness, Youthful gladness
Cyclamen	Resignation, Diffidence, Goodbye
<u>Daffodil</u>	Regard, Unequalled Love



<u>Daisy</u>	Innocence, Loyal love, I'll never tell
<u>Daylily</u>	Chinese emblem for mother
<u>Dill</u>	Powerful against evil
Edelweiss	Courage, devotion
Fennel	Flattery

Fern	Magic, Fascination, Secret bonds of love
<u>Forget-me-not</u>	True love memories, Do not forget me
<u>Gardenia</u>	You're lovely, Secret love
<u>Geranium</u>	Folly, Stupidity
<u>Gladiolus</u>	Flower of the Gladiators, Integrity, Strength, Victory
Goldenrod	Encouragement, Good fortune
Heliotrope	Eternal love, Devotion
<u>Hibiscus</u>	Delicate beauty



Hollyhock	Ambition
Honeysuckle	Bonds of love
<u>Hyacinth</u>	Sport, Game, Play
– Blue Hyacinth	Constancy
– Purple Hyacinth	Sorrow

- Yellow Hyacinth	Jealousy
- White Hyacinth	Loveliness, Prayers for someone
<u>Hydrangea</u>	Gratitude for being understood; Frigidity and heartlessness
Hyssop	Sacrifice, Cleanliness
<u>Iris</u>	Faith, trust, Wisdom, Hope, Valor
<u>Ivy</u>	Affection, Friendship, Fidelity
<u>Jasmine</u> , white	Sweet love, Amiability
Jasmine, yellow	Grace; Elegance



<u>Larkspur</u>	Open heart, levity, lightness, fickleness (pink or simple varieties).
<u>Lavender</u>	Distrust
Lemon balm	Sympathy
<u>Lilac</u>	Joy of youth
<u>Lily</u> (white)	Virginity, Purity, Heavenly

Lily (yellow)	Happy, Gay, Walking on air
Lily (orange)	Hatred
Lily, tiger	Wealth, Pride
<u>Lily-of-the-valley</u>	Sweetness, Tears of the Virgin Mary, Humility
Lotus Flower	Purity, Enlightenment, Self-regeneration, and Rebirth
Magnolia	Nobility, Love of nature
<u>Marigold</u>	Grief, jealousy
<u>Marjoram</u>	Joy and happiness



<u>Morning glory</u>	Affection
Myrtle	Good luck, love in a marriage
<u>Nasturtium</u>	Patriotism, Conquest, Victory in Battle
Oak	Strength
<u>Oregano</u>	Substance

<u>Pansy</u>	Thoughts
<u>Parsley</u>	Festivity
<u>Peony</u>	Bashful, Happy Life or Shame
Pine	Humility, Piety
Poppy	Consolation
<u>Rhododendron</u>	Danger, beware
<u>Rose</u> , red	Love, I love you
Rose, dark crimson	Mourning



Rose, white	Innocence, Heavenly, I'm worthy of you
Rose, yellow	Jealousy, Decrease of love, Infidelity
<u>Rosemary</u>	Remembrance
Rue	Grace, clear vision
<u>Sage</u>	Wisdom, immortality

<u>Salvia</u> , blue	I think of you
<u>Salvia</u> , red	Forever mine
Savory	Spice, interest
Snapdragon	Deception, Graciousness
Sorrel	Affection
Southernwood	Constancy, jest
Spearmint	Warmth of sentiment
<u>Speedwell</u>	Feminine fidelity



Sunflower, tall	Haughtiness
<u>Sweet pea</u>	Blissful pleasures, Good-bye, Thank you for a lovely time
<u>Sweet William</u>	Gallantry
Sweet woodruff	Humility
Tansy	Hostile thoughts, declaring war

Tarragon	Lasting interest
Thyme	Courage, strength
Tulip , red	Passion, declaration of love
Tulip, yellow	Sunshine in your smile
Valerian	Readiness
Violet	Watchfulness, Modesty, Faithfulness
Willow	Sadness
Yarrow	Everlasting love



Flower Meanings by Color

Flowers provided an incredibly nuanced form of communication. Some plants, including [roses](#), poppies, and [lilies](#), could express a wide range of emotions based on their color alone.

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Take, for instance, all of the different meanings attributed to variously colored carnations: Pink meant “I’ll never forget you”; red said “my heart aches for you”; purple conveyed capriciousness; white was for the “the sweet and lovely”; and yellow expressed romantic rejection.



Likewise, a white violet meant “innocence,” while a purple violet said that the bouquet giver’s “thoughts were occupied with love.” A red rose was used to openly express feelings of love, while a red tulip was a confession of love. The calla lily was interpreted to mean “magnificent beauty,” and a clover said “think of me.”

Unsurprisingly, the **color of the rose** plays a huge role. Red roses symbolize love and desire, but roses come in a variety of colors and each has their own meaning.

- **White rose:** purity, innocence, reverence, a new beginning, a fresh start.
- **Red rose:** love, I love you
- **Deep, dark crimson rose:** mourning

- **Pink rose:** grace, happiness, gentleness
- **Yellow rose:** jealousy, infidelity
- **Orange rose:** desire and enthusiasm
- **Lavender rose:** love at first sight
- **Coral rose:** friendship, modesty, sympathy



What wedding flowers mean

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One tradition is to select the flowers of a wedding bouquet based on plant symbolism. As an example, look to the royal flower bouquet in the wedding of Prince William, Duke

of Cambridge, to Kate Middleton (now Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge). Her all-white bouquet had lily-of-the-valley (representing trustworthiness, purity), sweet William (gallantry), hyacinth (loveliness), myrtle (love in marriage), and ivy (continuity). Altogether, these flowers' meanings reveal the hope of a loving, everlasting marriage.

The groom, too, wears a flower that appears in the bridal bouquet in his button-hole. This stems from the Medieval tradition of wearing his Lady's colors, as a declaration of his love.

One fun modern idea is to give each bridesmaid a bouquet featuring a signature flower whose meaning suits her personality.

*There is a language, little known,
Lovers claim it as their own.
Its symbols smile upon the land,
Wrought by nature's wondrous hand;
And in their silent beauty speak,
Of life and joy, to those who seek*





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COMMENTS

Ruth Kaplan-Kramer (not verified) 1 month ago

Rudbekias are my favorite perennial in the garden and in the vase. The only variety I don't like is goldstrum; i fail to see why it is so often recommended. it is a short plant with small flowers with short stems, only suitable for the smallest of vases and lost in a big bouquet. I also like the wild black eyed susans , second only to the wild white daisies, if anything. Every summer, we visited my grandparents at their motel in the Adirondack mountains and both white and black-eyed daisies lined every path and road along with the wild berries that we picked for dinner We ate many of them while we were out picking. Somehow managed to bring home enough for dessert for the family most of the time but we ate more than we brought home in the bowl. The white daisies and

black eyed susans cheer me every Spring when I drive out in the country and remind me of easier times as a kid when we were happy to have wildflowers to pick for a vase on the kitchen table. When they moved the house to a new location to make room for a swimming pool for the motel they rolled it on big logs cut in their own woods and the vase of flowers on the kitchen table did not spill. It was one small detail of a fascinating experience of watching part of the house move from one spot to a new one. They felt they needed the pool to stay in business in a tourist area. They spent every summer there running the motel until it became too hard for them to manage it and they stayed in Brooklyn all year. We lived on a farm near Philadelphia so had our own wildflowers to pick and a big vegetable garden and apple, sour pie cherries, pear and peach trees instead of wild berries and a large strawberry patch to weed.

REPLY

REPLY

Rabbi (not verified) 2 months 3 weeks ago

It is true, ascribed to flowers are different meanings. The ones ascribed during Victorian times are often the dominant ones known historically. As well secret meanings have been orally transmitted, sometimes penned in private diaries for believed ones to hold to heart and pass down to their kin.

Happy Mother's Day Dear One. We shall prevail. Mother's seed the world's most profound gardens and shall be honored in future time. Aloha nui v'shalom, RL

REPLY

Hollow Hylan (not verified) 2 months 4 weeks ago

I've actually seen that recently too, the yellow rose seems to mean either depending on the culture, as most things like this do. i personally assign the definition found here, that is infidelity, jealousy, etc., because there are 3 other flowers that mean friendship: arborvitae, ivy, and coral rose

REPLY



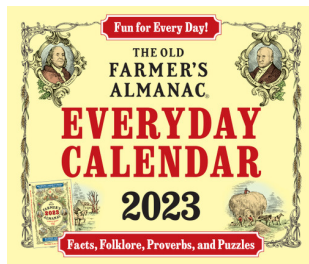
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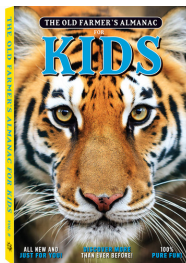
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