

MAY FLOWERS CONTEST

After wet and gloomy April, dozens of species of flowers bloom out of their winter hibernation in May and completely transform the landscape with their vibrant and brilliant colors. They say “April showers brings May flowers” and it truly does. Below is a list of only some of the flowers that make their debut in the month of May, along with some interesting facts about their meaning and symbolism.



Tulip

Although different tulip colors carry distinct meanings - yellow tulips symbolizing cheerful thoughts, white conveying forgiveness and purple representing royalty - a Turkish legend may be responsible for the red tulip's symbolism. The story goes that a prince named Farhad was love struck by a maiden named Shirin. When Farhad learned that Shirin had been killed, he was so overcome with grief that he killed himself - riding his horse over the edge of a cliff. It's said that a scarlet tulip sprang up from each droplet of his blood, giving the red tulip the meaning "perfect love." The 11th wedding anniversary flower, it's said that the tulip's velvety black center represents a lover's heart, darkened by the heat of passion. With the power to rival roses in their red variety and the sweet charm to express simple joy when yellow, it's no wonder that in addition to all its other symbolism, in the language of flowers, a tulip bouquet represents elegance and grace.



Rose

Each color offers a distinct meaning: red, the lover's rose, signifies enduring passion; white, humility and innocence; yellow, expressing friendship and joy; pink, gratitude, appreciation and admiration; orange, enthusiasm and desire; white lilac and purple roses represent enchantment and love at first sight. The number of stems in a rose bouquet can also express specific sentiments. The June birth flower and the 15th wedding anniversary flower, roses are also the national flower of the United States. And, not surprisingly, June - the month so often associated with weddings - is National Rose Month.



Daffodil

Symbolizing rebirth and new beginnings, the daffodil is virtually synonymous with spring. Though their botanic name is narcissus, daffodils are sometimes called jonquils, and in England, because of their long association with Lent, they're known as the "Lent Lily." Lore connecting the daffodil to not only a sign of winter's end but a lucky emblem of future prosperity is found throughout the world. In Wales, it's said if you spot the first daffodil of the season, your next 12 months will be filled with wealth, and Chinese legend has it that if a daffodil bulb is forced to bloom during the New Year, it will bring good luck to your home. The March birth flower and the 10th wedding anniversary flower, a gift of daffodils is said to ensure happiness. But always remember to present daffodils in a bunch - the same legends that associate this cheerful flower with good fortune warn us that when given as a single bloom, a daffodil can foretell misfortune.



Hyacinth

Legend has it the origin of hyacinth, the highly fragrant, bell-shaped flower, can be traced back to a young Greek boy named Hyakinthos. As the story goes, two gods - Apollo the sun god, and Zephyr the god of the west wind - adored Hyakinthos and competed for his attention. One day, while Apollo was teaching Hyakinthos the art of throwing a discus, Zephyr, in a jealous rage, blew the discus back, killing Hyakinthos with a strike to the head. Apollo named the flower that grew from Hyakinthos's blood hyacinth. Symbolizing sport or play in the language of flowers, hyacinth represent constancy, while blue hyacinth expresses sincerity.



Sweet Pea

With its richly colored yet small, delicate flowers, the sweet pea's history can be traced back to 17th century Italy, when a Sicilian monk, Franciscus Cupani, sent its seeds to England. Although that original sweet pea bore little resemblance to the flower we know today, when Harry Eckford, a Scottish nurseryman, crossbred the original flower, he created the colorful, ornamental and sweetly scented sweet pea we know today. Eckford's varieties included the pink Dorothy Eckford, the lavender Lady Grisel Hamilton, the scarlet King Edward VII and perhaps his most famous, the Countess Spencer. Meaning delicate or blissful pleasure in the language of flowers, this enchanting flower remains a favorite fragrant blossom.



Peony

With a recorded history that dates back thousands of years, it's not surprising that even the mythology surrounding the origin of the peony has multiple versions. One legend has it that the peony is named after Paeon, a physician to the gods, who received the flower on Mount Olympus from the mother of Apollo. And another tells the story of that same physician who was "saved" from the fate of dying as other mortals by being turned into the flower we know today as the peony.

The traditional floral symbol of China, the state flower of Indiana, and the 12th wedding anniversary flower, peonies are known as the flower of riches and honor. With their lush, full, rounded bloom, peonies embody romance and prosperity and are regarded as an omen of good fortune and a happy marriage.



Iris

The iris's mythology dates back to Ancient Greece, when the goddess Iris, who personified the rainbow (the Greek word for iris), acted as the link between heaven and earth. It's said that purple irises were planted over the graves of women to summon the goddess Iris to guide them in their journey to heaven. Irises became linked to the French monarchy during the Middle Ages, eventually being recognized as their national symbol, the fleur-de-lis.

The February birth flower, the 25th wedding anniversary flower and the state flower of Tennessee, the iris's three upright petals are said to symbolize faith, valor and wisdom.



Lilac

The story of lilac, according to Greek mythology, begins with a beautiful nymph named Syringa (lilac's botanical name). Captivated by her beauty, Pan, the god of the forests and fields, chased Syringa through the forest. Frightened by Pan's affections, Syringa escaped him by turning herself into an aromatic bush - the flower we now refer to as lilac.

The 8th wedding anniversary flower and the state flower of New Hampshire (symbolizing the hardy character of the Granite State's citizens), lilacs are frequently considered a harbinger of spring, with the time of their bloom signaling whether spring will be early or late. In the language of flowers, purple lilacs symbolize the first emotions of love, while white lilacs represent youthful innocence.

Now for the fun part... Hidden in the May newsletter are the eight "May flowers" above (images will be exactly like above except smaller). Find all eight, neatly write their location below along with your name and phone number and hand it in to the front desk. One lucky winner, chosen at random among all correct entries received by May 31, will receive a \$25 Target Gift Card. Good luck!

May Flowers Contest Entry Form

TULIP _____

ROSE _____

DAFFODIL _____

HYACINTH _____

SWEETPEA _____

PEONY _____

IRIS _____

LILAC _____

Name _____ Phone _____