

Birth Flowers

Adapted from Sarah Regan and Old Farmer's Almanac



What are birth flowers?

The tradition of birth month flowers is thought to have begun in Roman times. Back then, flowers were used as decorations or given as gifts as a way to honor birthdays. As the "language of flowers" evolved in the 18th century and into the 19th century, certain flowers were used to send discreet messages through their various unspoken meanings. Fast-forward to today, and each month still has at least one beautiful bloom to its name.

January, Carnations Native to the Mediterranean area, the carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*) is a widely cultivated fringe-petaled flower, with a spicy fragrance. It was first imported to the United States in the 1850s. Translated from Greek, carnation is often referred to as "flower of the gods." Coming in an array of colors with different meanings. Red carnations, for example, symbolize love, while white represents purity. Interestingly, yellow means rejection.

February Violet The energy of February's birth flower is cool and moist. It has a long history of medicinal use and is thought to represent loyalty, as well as courage, wisdom, and faith. These little flowers are able to withstand harsh conditions, making them the perfect flower for midwinter.

March Daffodils Bright and sunny daffodils are a fitting for March, when we begin to see the first signs of spring. And just as spring represents new beginnings, rebirth, and joy, so do daffodils. It also symbolizes unequalled love, so giving this flower to someone expresses a deep love that can not be rivaled or imitated. The poet Keats said, daffodils bring "joy for ever". With their bright yellow petals, daffodils seem the perfect way to say that the sun is always shining whenever your loved one is around.

April Daisies These flowers open up at the first sign of sunlight, aptly named "daisy" from the Anglo Saxon "day's eye." Daisies are thought to represent innocence, purity. Yet, the daisy is also a flower given between friends to keep a secret; the daisy means "I'll never tell!"

May Hawthorn, there are almost 300 species of this flower. mostly known for its actions on the heart, both physically and energetically. It's a symbol of happiness, hope, and faith. Hawthorn flowers have long been symbols of all types of love. In Celtic traditions, the hawthorn is sacred as a symbol of protection and love.

June Rose, which like carnations, also comes in a variety of colors that have different meanings according to the language of flowers. Robinett tells mbg this flower is one of the most widely used, accessible, and versatile herbal remedies on earth. Red roses represent love, orange roses represent passion, and yellow can mean friendship (or jealousy). White ones represent, you guessed it, purity, and pink represent softer emotions like admiration.

July Water Lily calm and serene, July's birth flower is the water lily, gracefully resting atop fresh water. These flowers are also known as Nymphaea, which comes from the Greek word nymph, aka a feminine spirit that inhabits rivers and woods. Like most of the white flowers we've mentioned, this is another one that represents purity and also majesty.

August Poppy The brightly colored poppy is August's birth month flower, and it too comes in an array of colors. Nowadays, poppies are often used to honor those lost in battle, though they have different historical meanings. Red, for example, represents pleasure, while white is consolation, and yellow is wealth and success.

September Morning Glory the beautiful blue morning glory can be seen on vines and cascading up garden walls, and it symbolizes affection. They're aptly named "morning glory" because they open up very early in the day and close up early in the afternoon.

October Marigolds traditionally symbolized despair and grief over a loved one. It may be surprising that such a cheerful flower is associated with the dead. However, for many cultures, it's those neon-bright orange and yellow hues that represent the sunrays or light paths that guide their dearly departed. The warm, rich colors of marigolds make them a perfect flower for October, matching those autumnal vibes. The bright orange and yellow hues also represent the beauty and warmth of the rising Sun, and its power to resurrect. Today, we often focus more on sunny colors of the marigold, representing optimism and prosperity.

November Chrysanthemums, or "mums," as you've probably heard them called, are aromatic flowers that come in a variety of colors, forms and styles. Generally, mums are thought to symbolize friendship, joy, and positivity, though they're another example of a flower that has different meanings depending on their color. (Red almost always means love, and white almost always means purity.) In Japan, there's even a "Festival of Happiness" to celebrate this flower each year.

December Narcissus has a rich history and is very popular across the globe. Originating in the Mediterranean, the narcissus eventually got to Asia where it became widely spread across China. From there, the narcissus made its way into Europe via European colonists and eventually made its way into North America. Commonly, the narcissus represents faithfulness, modesty, and respect, especially when used as symbols in art and literature. It also depends on where in the world you're from. For example, the Chinese believe it symbolizes prosperity and wealth, while the early Victorians considered it representative of a selfish, egotistical individual. They also represent sweetness, and giving them to someone suggests you think they're wonderful just as they are.

Whether you relate to your given flower or are just looking for a great gift option for someone's big day, knowing about birth flowers can certainly come in handy. From their rich symbolism to their beauty to their soothing properties, it's no wonder bouquets of flowers have stood the test of time as the perfect presents.

