

Floriography

The meaning of flowers



Flowers are a great way to communicate your love and affection. Over the years, flowers developed sentimental meanings that express a special message. Throughout history, including the Victorian Era and many cultures including the Persians have used flowers to send secret messages to others.

Floriography is the forgotten language or secret language of flowers. With it, flowers in a bouquet are like words or phrases in a sentence. Each one can convey a different part of the message or emotion. The next time you give flowers, consider selecting ones that express your feelings.

Birth month flowers

January: Carnation

February: Violet, Iris

March: Daffodil

April: Sweet Pea, daisy, peony

May: Lily of the Valley

June: Rose

July: Larkspur, Delphinium

August: Gladiolus, dahlia

September: Aster

October: Calendula

November: Chrysanthemum

December: Narcissus, poinsettia, holly, or paperwhite

Flower meanings

Amaryllis: Pride

Anemone: Forsaken

Aster: Daintiness, patience

Azalea: Take care of yourself, fragile passion

Baby's breath: Lasting love

Bachelor button: Single blessedness

Bells-of-Ireland: Good luck

Bittersweet: Truth

Bluebell: Humility

Calendula (marigold): Cruelty, grief, jealousy



Calla: Beauty

Carnation

- Pink: I'll never forget you
- Purple: Unsure
- Red: My heart aches for you, admiration
- Solid: Yes.
- Striped: No, I cannot be with you
- White: Sweet and lovely, innocence and love
- Yellow: Disdain

Chrysanthemum: Truth, friendship

Clover: Providence

Coreopsis: Always cheerful

Crocus: Cheerfulness

Cyclamen: Resignation and goodbye

Daffodil: Regard, unequalled love, new beginnings

Daisy: Innocence, loyal love, purity

Dandelion: Faithfulness, happiness

Daylily: Coquetry

Daylily (Tiger lily): Wealth, pride

Fern: Secret bond of love

Forget me not: True love, memories
Forsythia: Anticipation
Gardenia: Secret love
Geranium: Stupidity, folly
Gladiolus: Strong character, give me a break, I'm really sincere, you pierce my heart
Gloxinia: Love at first sight
Grass: Submission
Hellebore: Anxiety
Hibiscus: Delicate beauty
Holly: Defense, domestic happiness
Hollyhock: Fertility
Hyacinth: Rashness, play
Hydrangea: Thank you for understanding, heartlessness, and frigidity
Iris: Faith and hope
Ivy: Wedded love, fidelity, friendship, affection
Jonquil: Desire, love me
Larkspur: Playful, frivolous
Lilies: Life, chastity, innocence, purity
Lily of the Valley: Sweetness, humility, return to happiness
Magnolia: Nobility
Marigold (calendula): Cruelty, grief, jealousy
Mistletoe: Kiss me, affection
Monkshood: Beware
Moss: Maternal love, charity
Narcissus: Egotism, formality
Nasturtium: Conquest
Orchid: Beauty and love
Peony: Shame, happy life, and marriage
Petunia: Resentment, anger, your presence soothes me
Poppy: Eternal sleep, oblivion, imagination
Primrose: I can't live without you

Rose

- In full bloom: I love you
- Burgundy: Unconscious beauty
- Orange: Fascination
- Peach: Modesty, gratitude, appreciation, admiration, sympathy
- Pink: Grace and admiration
- Purple: Enchantment
- Red and white: Unity
- Red: Love, respect, courage
- White: Purity, secrecy
- Yellow: Joy, gladness, freedom, jealousy, infidelity
- Rosebud: Youth and beauty

Snapdragon: Deception, gracious lady

Stephanotis: Happiness in marriage

Stock: Bonds of affection, promptness

Sunflower: Haughtiness

Sweet Pea: Goodbye, blissful pleasure, thank you for a lovely time

Tulip: Perfect lover, fame

- Red: Believe me, declaration of love
- Variegated: Beautiful eyes
- Yellow: Sunshine and smiles

Violet: Faithfulness and modesty

Wisteria: Will you dance with me?

Zinnia: Lasting affection, constancy, goodness

Resources

The Language of Flowers, Iowa State University Extension
Heilmeyer, Marina. The Language of Flowers: Symbols and Myths. 2001.
Kirkby, Mandy. A Victorian Flower Dictionary. 2011.
Durant, Mary. Who Named the Daisy? Who Names the Rose? 1976.

Authors

Bruce J. Black, Horticulture Educator; and
Rhonda Ferree, retired horticulture educator

Updated November 2022

Build your best life. Trust Extension to help.
extension.illinois.edu



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN