

FLORIOGRAPHY: THE MEANING OF FLOWERS

Lesson developed by: Sue Worstall, Summit County Master Gardener Volunteer

Overview: A nature appreciation activity to use as a 1:1 cart activity or with small or large groups, which encourages participants to share memories and appreciate flower meanings.

Questions:

- Do you know what flower is universally known for love? Rose. Did you know that different colors of roses have different meanings?
 - ❖ Red – romantic love
 - ❖ Pink – perfect happiness
 - ❖ White – innocence, purity, you're heavenly
 - ❖ Yellow – decreased love, jealousy
 - ❖ Rosebud – beauty, youth
- Do you have a favorite flower? Do you know its meaning?
- Have you ever communicated through the use of flowers?

Introduction:

Floriography is the language of flowers. Plants and flowers were used in the Hebrew Bible and William Shakespeare ascribed meanings to flowers in some of his plays. It is believed that romantic flower language began in Turkey during the 17th century when suitors began using flowers to convey emotional messages.

In Victorian England, motivated by Queen Victoria's public fascination for flowers, people endowed flowers with very specific meanings and used them to communicate emotions and messages under their chaperones' watchful eyes. Dozens of flower dictionaries were published.

Tussie-Mussies, or nosegays, developed into the text messages of the Victorian world. Typically wrapped in a doily and bound by ribbon, women could pin them to their chests or carry them. Every aspect of a talking-bouquet was symbolically infused. The central flower, not surprisingly, formed the central message. Herbs, foliage and flowers were only added around it if their meanings added to the central message. The way a woman held or wore the small bouquet conveyed the degree of her acceptance of the message.



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Modern Day Floriography:

In 2011, Kate Middleton turned to the language of flowers on her wedding day to convey a personal message to those fluent. Designed in the all white floral traditional, her bouquet (a modern evolution of Tussie-Mussies) featured floral sentiments reminiscent of Queen Victoria.

In Kate's bouquet, Lily-of-the-Valley symbolized innocence, Sweet William Dianthus was gallantry, Hyacinth stood for the constancy of love, and Ivy articulated marriage and fidelity. She also had a sprig of Myrtle (meaning the love of home and duty) from a plant grown from the sprig of Myrtle in Queen Victoria's wedding nosegay.

Presentation materials:

For 1:1s and small groups: Two 20" x 30" foam display boards. Duct tape for hinging one side of each board together to form a display easel. Small utility cart to hold the foam board easel for 1:1 visit or group viewing. Approx. 8" x 10" picture of each flower.

Copies of flower photos can be shown to clients by enlarging, printing and mounting to the above board; printed on cardstock and shared; or used in a PowerPoint presentation. If able, actual samples can be shown. Rose, lavender and other essential oils can also be shared.

Flowers and Their Meanings:



Aster: symbol of love, daintiness, contentment



Daffodil: unrequited love, you are the only one, chivalry



Dahlia: good taste, pomp



<https://www.inaturalist.org/photos/35724456>, no rights reserved (mr_bumble, 2019)

Forget-me-not: true love, good memories, faithful, remember me. Forget-me-nots are the official flower of the Alzheimer's Society, and per the society, they gently remind us to never forget those who have been lost to the disease.

Photos: by Sue Worstall unless noted otherwise



Pansy: you fill my thoughts



Rose: love, beauty



Sunflower: pride, sunshine, devotion

Contact information:

If you have any questions about this activity, please email mgsummitcounty@gmail.com.

We hope you benefitted from this activity. Please let us know if you utilized this with a quick email to the above address. Please send your name, facility name, number of participants involved in this activity, and your feedback for improvement so we can measure our impact and improve this product. Thank you!

Resources: <https://salisburygreenhouse.com/floriography>

Warne, Frederick. Flower Fairies: The Meaning of Flowers, Penguin Group, 1996.