

LIFESTYLE

WHAT IS THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS? LEARN WHAT THE MOST POPULAR FLOWERS SYMBOLIZE

The hidden meanings behind roses, carnations, and more.



Written by [Kaleb A. Brown](#), News Staff Writer who ties events you care about to products you need.
Updated May 10, 2024

Products are chosen independently by our editors. Purchases made through our links may earn us a commission.

Flowers are a universal gift. How do we know? You can give someone a bouquet for any occasion — **Mother’s Day**, Father’s Day, **graduation**, Veteran’s Day, and of course, Valentine’s Day. Flowers are popular primarily because of their beauty, but if you’re looking to upgrade your **bouquets** with heartwarming meaning, consider delving into the language of flowers. By thinking about flowers’ meanings, you can have a bouquet with a meaningful message rolled into it. It can say "I love your strength and gracefulness" or "you're my best friend and I'll love you always." Here’s a primer on the language of flowers.

What is the language of flowers?

The language of flowers or “floriography” refers to using flowers to send a message. Modern floriography can be traced back to the Victorian Era where it was just as much a necessity as it was a hobby, for **etiquette** standards meant that flowers were sent to communicate messages that could not be said aloud. Floriography continues to be used to this day by enthusiasts.

What are the most popular flowers to give?

What is the most popular flower to give for Mother’s Day?

There are many **flowers** given for Mother’s Day. Beyond roses and carnations, lilies are often given.

What is the most popular flower to give for Valentine’s Day?

The most popular flower to give for Valentine’s Day is the rose.

What is the most popular flower to give for graduation?

One of the most popular flowers to give for **graduation** is the carnation.

Flower meanings

Roses

Roses are widely known as the **flowers of love** and romance. When it comes to floriography, color is important. White roses are associated with purity, innocence, and new beginnings. While roses are typically seen as romantic, they can stand in for familial love as well.



Rose Elegance Premium Long Stem White Roses

White roses are associated with purity, innocence, and new beginnings.

BUY NOW
at 1-800 Flowers

As such, when paired with red roses, the combination can express excitement over a new relationship.



Teleflora's Snowy Night Bouquet

You can pair red roses with white roses.

BUY NOW
at Teleflora

Lavender roses are one of the flower's most striking variants and the meaning behind them is fittingly grandiose, associated with love at first sight.



Lovely Lanvender Rose

Lavender roses mean love at first sight.

BUY NOW
at 1-800 Flowers

Irises and tulips

Premade bouquets can save you money instead of buying individual flowers, and they can still come with a wonderful message. Take, for example, this bouquet of tulips and irises from **1-800 Flowers**. Among other things, an iris can symbolize trust and faith, while red tulips symbolize passion. Combined, these flowers make a bouquet that says, "our passionate love is based on trust" or "I have faith that our passion will continue to thrive."



Fanciful Spring Tulip & Iris Bouquet

If you want a bouquet that offers a more full and plentiful look, opt for an iris and tulip combination.

BUY NOW
at 1-800 Flowers

Orchids

Some flowers are beautiful yet hold negative meanings. This is not the case with the orchid, which has a meaning just as beautiful as its look. Orchids symbolize love, beauty, and refinement, a fitting meaning for one of the loveliest flowers you'll ever see. The presentation of this particular orchid is heightened by **its absolutely gorgeous pot.**



Exotic Breeze Orchids

Want to take someone's breath away? Go with an orchid arrangement that has vibrant colors.

BUY NOW
at 1-800 Flowers

Carnations

Carnations, in general, symbolize "fascination." Like roses, a carnation can take on a more specific meaning depending on its color. Red carnations denote a deep love as well as a sense of longing. Pink carnations are used to tell the recipient that they'll never be forgotten. This bouquet contains both red and pink carnations.



Thoughtful Expressions Bouquet

Gift a beautiful bouquet that lets someone know they won't be forgotten.

BUY NOW
at From You Flowers

Calla lily

As the song by James Blunt goes, the calla lily emphatically says, "you're beautiful." Give a bouquet of calla lilies to tell someone how stunning they are . Calla lilies are sometimes used in weddings; in that context, they often denote marital bliss and devotion.



Sending Peaceful Wishes Bouquet

Tell someone they're beautiful with stunning calla lily flowers.

BUY NOW
at 1-800 Flowers

Gladiolus

Both "gladiator" and "gladiolus" are derived from the Latin word for sword "gladius." With that in mind, it should come as no surprise that in the language of flowers, gladioli represent "strength." They can be used to praise your recipient for their strength, describe how deeply you love them, or describe your relationship as a whole.



Soaring Elegance

Know someone who deserves to be recognized for their strength? Gift them with a gladiolus.

BUY NOW
at From You Flowers

Amaryllis

Amaryllis is a beautiful, crimson flower with several meanings behind it. Thanks to its height and sturdiness, the amaryllis has been associated with strength and determination. Those same traits have led it to be a symbol of pride and success.



Wax-Coated Red Blooming Amaryllis Bulb

If you're giving someone an amaryllis arrangement, you can take pride in its beautiful appearance and heartwarming symbolism.

BUY NOW
at Home Depot

Sunflower

Dwarf sunflowers (a.k.a. the kind you can fit in a bouquet) are classically associated with adoration. Many sources further specify them to mean adoration and appreciation towards friendship. If you have a platonic relationship with the person you're giving a flower to a sunflower will make for the perfect bouquet. That said, sunflowers are still appropriate for a romantic Valentine's Day gift as any great relationship is rooted in a deep friendship. If you're wary of giving the wrong idea, you can create a bouquet of roses and sunflowers to ensure your Valentine knows that your friendship is mixed with romance.



Sunflower Bouquet

Add a little sunshine into your special someone's life this Valentine's Day.

BUY NOW
at 1-800 Flowers

Cactus

They're certainly unorthodox, but as they're flowering plants, **cacti** are fair game to be used in the language of flowers. Cacti are hardy plants, as they're able to thrive in the brutal desert with minimal water and deter predators with their countless spines. Thanks to these traits, in the language of flowers, cacti are often said to represent an enduring love that can weather any storm.



Cactus Dish Garden

Gift a cactus for a more unorthodox plant.

BUY NOW
at 1-800 Flowers

A cactus will make for a unique gift. If you want to commit to a more "flowery" cactus, we recommend buying a Christmas cactus.



Christmas Cactus Schlumbergera Pink and White Potted in 2in Pot

Buy a Christmas cactus for more traditional flower look.

BUY NOW
at Amazon

Weeping fig

Flowers aren't the only plants that have been ascribed meaning. Many **trees** have symbolic significance—one of them is the weeping fig. Don't let the name scare you; the tree sheds tears of joy and is associated with peace and abundance. As a message, it can be used to say: "I feel at peace when I'm with you." A tree makes for a perfect gift for someone who isn't into flowers and loves growing things. If you still want to give flowers, you can present the tree alongside a bouquet. With a more mature tree, you can even incorporate the bouquet into the leaves or at the base of the plant.



Ficus Benjamina Weeping Fig

A weeping fig can be used as a positive affirmation to anyone who needs it.

BUY NOW
at Amazon

Flowers to avoid

If you're paying enough attention to the meaning of flowers to care about their positive associations, you should take caution to avoid flowers with negative ones. That said, in many instances, you can get away with using a flower with a negative meaning in your arrangement as long as you can explain the positive association when you present it. For example, a **yellow rose** can symbolize jealousy and greed, but it can also symbolize friendship.

As innocuous as **orange lilies** may appear, they carry a highly negative association: hatred. **Cyclamens** are context sensitive. They're often associated with forging a new path after separation, which is nice to give to a friend who's going through a breakup, but to your significant other it's akin to a resignation letter. **Yellow carnations** make for a similarly awkward gift if given your significant other, as they mean disdain and rejection. **Black roses** might be a very cool rose variant, but—and it pains me to say it—they typically shouldn't be given as a bouquet. Why? They send a morbid message: death.

Sign up for our newsletter.

Get the best deals and the best advice dropped right in your inbox.

If you are a human, ignore this field

Enter your email:

Related content



✓ FEATURE

Here's why Amazon won't ship some items to Canada



✓FEATURE

Here's what every Canadian needs to know about shopping on U.S. websites

Prices were accurate at the time this article was published but may change over time.

The product experts at **Reviewed** have all your shopping needs covered. Follow Reviewed on **Facebook**, **Twitter**, **Instagram**, **TikTok**, or **Flipboard** for the latest deals, product reviews, and more.



UP NEXT

Sign up for our newsletter.

Get the best deals and the best advice dropped right in your inbox.

If you are a human, ignore this field

Enter your email

→



©2024 Reviewed, a division of Gannett Satellite Information Network LLC. All rights reserved.

Products are chosen independently by our editors. Purchases made through our links may earn us a commission.

[Appliances](#)

[Kitchen & Cooking](#)

[Home & Garden](#)

[Tech](#)

[Lifestyle](#)

[Parenting](#)

[Celebrations](#)

[Accessibility](#)

[About Us](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Advertising](#)

[The Best Right Now](#)

[Deals](#)

[Award Winners](#)

[How-Tos](#)

[How We Test](#)

[Videos](#)

[Terms of Service](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Accessibility Statement](#)

[Licensing & Permissions](#)

 [Your Privacy Choices](#)

[Ethics](#)

[Sitemap](#)

[Canada Edition](#)

[Send Feedback](#)

[Deals](#)

[Coupons](#)











