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## THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS: SYMBOLISM AND MEANINGS IN FLORICULTURE

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"The Language of Flowers: Symbolism and Meanings in Floriculture" is a captivating exploration into the rich tapestry of symbolism woven into the world of flowers. This ancient language, also known as "floriography," has been used for centuries to convey emotions, sentiments and messages without the need for words.

From the Victorian era, where flowers were used to express feelings that society often deemed unutterable, to ancient Japanese Hanakotoba, the art of assigning meanings to flowers has deep cultural and historical roots.

The publication of "Le Langage des Fleurs" (The Language of Flowers) by Charlotte de Latour in 1819 in France is considered one of the catalysts for the popularity of floriography. The book assigned specific meanings to various flowers, providing a reference guide for individuals wanting to convey particular messages. One of the most popular was "The Language of Flowers" by Kate Greenaway, published in 1884.

As readers journey through this article, they discover that each flower carries its own unique significance. Roses, for instance, are not merely tokens of love; different colours convey specific emotions, from red symbolizing passion to yellow expressing friendship. With its pristine beauty, the lily often symbolizes purity and renewal, while the vibrant sunflower exudes positivity and adoration.

The symbolism of flowers can vary across cultures and regions, but many flowers have acquired consistent meanings over time. Here are some common flowers and their traditional symbolic meanings:

**Rose:**

- Red Rose: Love, passion, respect.
- White Rose: Purity, innocence, new beginnings.
- Yellow Rose: Friendship, joy, happiness.
- Pink Rose: Gratitude, admiration, appreciation.
- Orange Roses: Enthusiasm and desire.

**Lily:**

- White Lily: Purity, virtue, chastity.
- Tiger Lilies: Wealth and pride.
- Calla Lily: Magnificent beauty.

**Tulip:**

- Red Tulip: Declaration of love.
- Yellow Tulip: Hopeless love or cheerful thoughts.
- White Tulip: Forgiveness, worthiness.

**Daisy:**

- White Daisy: Innocence, purity.
- Gerbera Daisy: Cheerfulness, joy.

**Orchid:**

- Beauty, strength, and love.
- Different colours may convey specific emotions (e.g., purple for admiration, pink for grace).

**Sunflower:**

- Adoration and loyalty.
- Symbolize the sun and positive energy.

**Carnation:**

- Red Carnation: Deep love, admiration.
- Pink Carnation: Gratitude, remembrance.
- White Carnation: Pure love, good luck.

**Iris:**

- Faith, hope, and wisdom.
- Blue irises can symbolize faith and hope, while yellow irises may represent passion.

**Chrysanthemum:**

- Red Chrysanthemum: Love.
- White Chrysanthemum: Truth, loyal love.
- Yellow Chrysanthemum: Slighted love.
- Traditionally associated with death and funerals in many Western cultures.

- In some Asian cultures, they symbolize life and are associated with happiness and longevity.

**Daffodil:**

- Daffodil: New beginnings, eternal life. Symbolize the renewal of life.
- Yellow Daffodil: Regard, chivalry.

**Hydrangea:**

- Hydrangea: Understanding, heartfelt emotions.
- Blue Hydrangea: Frigidity, apology.

**Peony:**

- Prosperity, good fortune, and a happy marriage.
- Often associated with romance and love.

**Baby's Breath (Gypsophila):**

- Innocence and purity.
- Often used as a filler in arrangements to complement other flowers.

These meanings are a general guide and can be influenced by factors such as colour, cultural context and personal experiences. It's essential to consider the specific cultural or regional interpretations when gifting flowers or interpreting their meanings. Additionally, contemporary practices may vary and individuals might ascribe personal meanings to flowers based on their own sentiments and experiences.

Furthermore, this article explores the importance of flower combinations and arrangements in conveying nuanced messages. A bouquet carefully crafted with complementary flowers can express complex emotions or tell a story. It highlights the importance of context in interpreting these floral messages, as the same flower may

convey different meanings depending on the cultural or historical background.

A floral *veni*, also known as "veni poo" or "veni mala," is a traditional South Indian hair accessory worn by women. It's a flower garland woven into the hair, often encircling a bun or braided hairstyle. Worn during weddings, festivals, and religious events, the *veni* holds cultural and ritual significance. Jasmine flowers, commonly used in wedding *venis*, symbolize purity and beauty. The *veni* may symbolize blessings, good wishes and mark the beginning of a new phase in life.

Garlands symbolize joy and are used in celebrations, weddings and religious ceremonies. The circular shape signifies unity. They express honour and respect, often placed around someone's neck as a gesture of appreciation. In Hinduism, flower garlands show devotion to deities. Offering garlands to guests expresses warm hospitality. In agricultural cultures, garlands represent the cycle of life and renewal through plants and flowers.

Wreath, a circular arrangement of flowers or leaves, symbolizes eternity, love and memories. Its shape signifies the cyclical nature of life. Historically linked to victory and honour, wreaths are commonly used in funerals, representing remembrance and mourning. The circle denotes the life-death cycle, while evergreens express enduring memories. Wreaths also symbolize gratitude and respect. Hanging one on a door is thought to bring good luck and ward off negativity, making it a welcoming gesture.

**Corsages:** Small bouquets for women. Wrist corsages symbolize modern freedom, while pinned corsages on the dress are

traditional, associated with love and commitment.

**Boutonnieres:** Small flower arrangements for men. Traditionally worn on the left lapel to symbolize the groom's commitment and love. Some may prefer the right lapel based on cultural or personal choices.

Floral crowns are ancient and widespread, symbolizing abundance, fertility, and life's celebration. Worn on joyful occasions, they bring a festive and honourable vibe. In spiritual settings, they represent a connection to higher realms and purity. Also, they symbolize love, admiration, and the beauty of nature and creativity.

*Bajubandh* is a traditional and ornamental accessory in South Asia, commonly worn during weddings and festivals. It symbolizes status and elegance, with intricate designs often reflecting social or marital status. The armlet may carry meaning as a symbol of protection, or blessings and may be part of religious rituals. Wearing such traditional jewellery is a way to connect with cultural roots and preserve traditions. For women, it is associated with femininity and grace.

In addition to traditional symbolism, this article touches on the modern resurgence of interest in the language of flowers. In an era where personal expression is valued, individuals are turning to floriography to add depth and intention to their floral choices. Social media platforms showcase how people use flowers to communicate, whether it's to celebrate a milestone, express condolences, or simply brighten someone's day.

To conclude, "The Language of Flowers" not only guides understanding the intricate meanings behind each bloom but also invites readers to appreciate the art of communicating through nature's most delicate and expressive creations. It bridges the gap between the past and the present, offering a comprehensive look at how the language of flowers continues to blossom and evolve in our contemporary world.