

Flora's Flower Menu

Flower Meanings and Stories by Mackenzie Myrick

1. Zinnia (for the person who always lends an ear)

- *Lasting affection, Steadfastness, Direction*
- Long ago, there was a turtle who planted a flower garden on his back. He wanted to take beauty with him wherever he went. One day, he heard a sparrow crying in the trees. He positioned his shell under the tiny bird, so that when her tears fell, they landed in his garden. Immediately, zinnias began to sprout from the soil. The sparrow chirped with glee and decided to live in the turtle's garden, traveling with him wherever he went. Today, zinnias are believed to help one hold steadfast even in times of doubt.

2. Rose (for a deep and everlasting love)

- *Admiration, Elegance, Loyalty*
- Once there was a marmot who planted a garden full of roses. Roses, she knew, were one of the earth's first flowers, and thus she tasked herself with preserving the enchanting blooms for generations to come. Every morning she tended to the roses—watering them, pruning them, and speaking to them softly. Every evening, she tended to her soul—sipping tea, eating cookies, and perusing her underground library for her next read. But, every so often, when the rose bushes were especially full, she would stray from her routine, cut a single rose, and take it inside. Then, she would carefully press the flower inside the pages of a book. "I do this," she explained, "so that my ancestors will know the love of fresh roses and that of roses past. The first will lead them to create their own memories. The latter, to understand that love knows no bounds."

3. Marigold (for someone whose strength you admire)

- *Fortune, Fortitude, Resilience*
- Legend tells of a rabbit queen who lived in a grand palace. Her family had ruled the forest for centuries, and the moss covering the palace walls served as a testament to their long-lasting rule. One day, a terrible storm destroyed the palace and left only rubble in its wake. The rabbit queen took shelter in a nearby cave and wept as she watched her palace crumble. Later, as the storm cleared up, a tiny sliver of light reached through a crack in the cave's walls, illuminating a single marigold flower. "How unusual!" cried the rabbit queen,

who knew that marigolds did not grow in caves. She realized that though the flower was surrounded by darkness, it received just enough light to grow and thrive, despite its bleak circumstances. Thus, the rabbit queen immediately regained her strength and set forth to rebuild her palace.

4. Coneflower (*for someone who makes you smile and laugh*)

- *Playfulness, Happiness, Purity*
- There is no flower more beloved by bees, butterflies, and birds than the coneflower. These wildflowers, which are often pale yellow and purple in color, are full of rich nectar (the perfect snack for bees) and bite-sized seeds (a tasty treat for birds). In fact, pollinators so love these whimsical flowers that if you listen closely, you can hear the bees buzzing with excitement and the birds humming softly to themselves upon the discovery of a grove of coneflowers. And on occasion, you can even hear the butterflies giggling with delight as they take one last sip of nectar before bed.

5. Poppy (*for someone who inspires your deepest imagination*)

- *Creativity, Dreams, Imagination*
- Once there was a peacock who dreamed of the most wonderful, extravagant things: dreams of leopards gliding along rivers, dreams of faraway castles constructed entirely of flowers, dreams of trees that reached all the way to the moon. While he could easily see these scenes in his mind (he was the dreamer after all), he wanted a way to show them to others. One day during his daily walk, he stumbled across a bright red poppy flower. Stumbled, that is, in the literal sense of the word: He stepped on it. When he lifted his foot, he noticed that the grass around the smushed flower was tinted red, the same red as the poppy. From that day forward, the peacock created paint from the petals of poppies, and in turn, painted his dreams for all to see.

6. Sunflower (*for a joyful soul who radiates life*)

- *Radiance, Cheer, Joy*
- The Sea of Sunflowers is the oldest and most important flower field in existence, for it is where the very first sunflower was born. Thousands of years ago, the sun, who longed to bring more joy to the earth, noticed a vast, empty prairie during his daily rotation. And so, to make the field more vibrant, he pointed a single ray of light at the grass, and from that light, a sunflower appeared. The flower was tall, bright, and mighty, just like the sun. After many

weeks, the sunflower began to wilt, and its seeds fell into the soil. The field remained empty until the following spring, when not one, but twenty new sunflowers sprouted from the earth. And, when it came time for them to wilt, they too dropped seeds into the soil. This pattern continued year after year, the field becoming more radiant and colorful with each passing season. Today, the sunflowers stretch far beyond what the eye can see: a true sea of sunflowers.

7. Cosmos (for the ethereal soul who is out of this world)

- *Rare, Beauty, Wonder*
- If you visit the moon one day, you will come across a very rare sight: craters full of white cosmos flowers. While these flowers may not be apparent to our eyes (or even our telescopes), I assure you they are there. They bloom all year long and do not need sunlight, water, or soil to grow. You see, there are small animals (similar to hedgehogs) that live in burrows beneath the moon's surface. They tend to the cosmos from below, feeding the plants stardust, which they collect during meteor showers.

8. Moonflower (for someone you love to the moon and back)

- *Appreciation, Enchantment, Comfort*
- Every evening, as the moon casts blue, shimmering light upon the forest, one mouse travels to the top of the highest tree to sit and talk to the moon. He tells her about his hopes and dreams, as well as his doubts, until he yawns a great big yawn, at which time he returns to his humble burrow and sleeps. On the night of the full moon, an owl (who had been watching the mouse perform this ritual every night) swooped down and grabbed the mouse in his beak. He tossed the mouse onto his back and instructed him to hold tight. The mouse, all the while, remained quiet. Together, the owl and mouse climbed higher and higher into the sky, until the mouse was as close to the moon as he had ever been. "Why did you not shriek in fear at the sight of me?" the owl asked later. "Because," said the mouse, "I have the moon watching over me."

9. Forget-Me-Nots (for a long distance or thoughtful love)

- *Fidelity, Memory, Thoughtfulness*
- As the name suggests, forget-me-not flowers are often given as reminders of a person's love and affection. But, how did they come to be tokens of remembrance? Many years ago, a red fox was setting out on a long journey,

one that would keep him away from home for many months. Before his departure, he gave each of his loved ones a small, blue flower to wear in their fur. "Through these flowers, we will be able to communicate. When you speak to the flower, I will hear your voice and forget-you-not. And, when I speak to the flower, you shall hear mine and forget-me-not." And so the foxes spoke through the flowers every day and never once were they truly apart.

10. Tulip (for someone who offers constant optimism and hope)

- *Renewal, Presence, Hope*
- Spring is a time of celebration for forest animals everywhere, as the frozen stoniness of winter melts and gives way to the fresh, sparkling streams of spring. For most of our forest dwelling friends, the first day of spring occurs when the brown bears awaken from slumber. In fact, seeing the brown bears emerge from their caves is such a joyous sight that the other forest animals adorn the bears from head to toe with tulips. Pink tulips, white tulips, and yellow ones, too. After the bears receive their elaborate floral clothing, they spend the rest of the day telling the forest of the dreams they had in hibernation—dreams of better and brighter days to come.