

Tale from the Garden!

FORGET-ME-NOT - The only plant with a rhythm & blues!

This rich bloomer brings beautiful blue, white or pink shades to your garden very early in the year, and then carries on growing madly until late in the spring. And next year? It pops back up of its own accord! Cute yet tough: the forget-me-not (officially called 'Myosotis') is a beauty that can take a knock (ie. a cold night). The delicate flowers appear in frothy blue clouds at the front of borders and at the edges of paths. They have a yellow eye and combine beautifully with the grey-green spiky leaves that appear a bit velvety. The Greek name Myosotis is a combination of 'mus' and 'otis' and means 'mouse ear' referring to the shape of the leaves.



The forget-me-not is an herbaceous plant which is a member of the Boraginaceae or borage family. It grows in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. There are many different species, of which the most common are the woodland forget-me-not (*Myosotis sylvatica*) and the Alpine forget-me-not (*Myosotis alpestris*). In the wild you usually see them in woodland where it's a bit damp. There they often spread with a noticeably steady rhythm, so that they look surprisingly tidy for wild plants.

It seems like nearly every country has its own story, legend, and history with forget me nots, dating all the way back to the creation of the world!

According to one German legend, while God was naming all the plants, one tiny plant that was still unnamed called out to Him, saying, "Forget me not, O Lord!" In response, God named the plant with the very same words. Another legend states a different side of the story. Apparently, God was busy giving all the flowers their colours but missed one out. He heard a tiny whisper saying, "Forget me not!" It came from none other than this tiny flower. God had only a little amount of pale blue colour left with Him, so He gave that colour to this flower, upon receiving which, the flower was delighted with joy.

And according to yet another story, the Christ Child was sitting on the Virgin Mary's lap and He wished that everyone in the future would get the chance to see her beautiful eyes. He then touched her eyes and waved His hand over the ground. As a result, the blue forget-me-not bloomed. Planting these in your garden would signify that the Virgin's eyes are watching over you.

Forget-me-nots have a strong symbolic value. The flower represents fidelity and never-ending love. There's a mediaeval legend about the plant, in which a knight picked a bunch of flowers for his beloved, but thereby fell into the water and sank instantly because of the weight of his armour. Before he drowned, he quickly threw the flowers to his maiden and shouted: "Forget me not".

Giving someone this flower means you truly love and respect this person. It is a testament to your relationships and promises the other person that you will never forget them in your thoughts.

Forget-me-nots represent long lasting connections that can exist between not only lovers, but also friends. This connection can't be broken or shaken by anything or anyone.

Historically, these flowers symbolize remembrance (not much of a surprise there) not only associated with love, but for those we've lost.

Forget-me-nots have also been claimed by the Freemasons to teach a valuable and important lesson: the dedication and courage it takes to hold to Masonic principles, even in the face of grave danger. In early 1934, soon after Hitler's rise to power, it became evident that Freemasonry was in danger. In that same year, the "Grand Lodge of the Sun" (one of the pre-war German Grand Lodges, located in Bayreuth) realizing the grave dangers involved, adopted the little blue Forget-Me-Not flower as a substitute for the traditional square and compasses. It was felt the flower would provide brethren with an outward means of identification while lessening the risk of possible recognition in public by the Nazis, who were engaged in wholesale confiscation of all Masonic Lodge properties. Freemasonry went undercover, and this delicate flower assumed its role as a symbol of Masonry surviving throughout the

reign of darkness. During the ensuing decade of Nazi power a little blue Forget-Me-Not flower worn in a Brother's lapel served as one method whereby brethren could identify each other in public, and in cities and concentration camps throughout Europe. The Forget-Me-Not distinguished the lapels of countless brethren who staunchly refused to allow the symbolic Light of Masonry to be completely extinguished.



The Alzheimer's Society also use the Forget-me-not as an icon to raise awareness for the disease and support for carers. This small blue flower was chosen because it represents remembrance. People with dementia may experience memory loss, among other symptoms, so this makes the forget-me-not the perfect flower to represent the charity. Living Memory is a poignant way for someone to donate & get a memorable gift in return. You'll be supporting the fight against dementia whilst also celebrating a loved one who has been affected. If you sign up to donating a regular gift, you'll receive forget-me-not seeds to plant in celebration of your loved one, top tips for growing, a plant marker and regular updates on how your gifts are helping to fight dementia, such as funding much-needed research into dementia, and helping to find new ways of supporting people who are fighting the disease right now.



You can enjoy planting your forget-me-not seeds and you'll be rewarded with stunning blooms year after year. And by celebrating your loved one in this special way you'll be helping to bring us closer to the day when dementia is cured.

And did you know ... The Armenian Genocide of 1.5 million innocent Armenians was carried out by the Ottoman Empire (modern-day Turkey) from 1915 to 1923. Armenians around the world remember the Armenian Genocide every year on April 24th. The official symbol of the Armenian Genocide is the Forget-Me-Not Flower. This flower was chosen as the symbol of commemoration of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide. **The Past** - The black centre symbolizes the horrors & suffering of 1915 and the memory & dark aftermath of the Genocide. **The present** – The light purple petals represents the Unity of Armenian communities around the world – all of whom stood together in the 100th year of remembrance. **The Future** - The five petals of the flower are the five continents where Armenian survivors found shelter, made new homes & were able to create thriving communities. The dark purple colour is meant to recall the priestly vestments of the Armenian Church - which has been, & will remain at the heart of the Armenian Christian identity. **Eternity** – the twelve pillars which form a circle at the centre of the flower symbolizes the Genocide Memorial of Tsiternakaberd in Armenia. The colour yellow represents light, creativity & hope.



What a fantastic message for today as we remember what's happened over the '**past**' year, tread carefully as we emerge into a new '**present**', look forward to a better '**future**' & know for certain that God's love is with us for '**eternity**'.