

## What Are the April Birth Flowers?

The April birth month flowers are the **daisy** and the **sweet pea**. The daisy stands for innocence, purity, and true love, while the sweet pea is a way to say goodbye, send good wishes, or merely convey a thank you.

### The Daisy

Stemming from Old English, the daisy comes from "day's eye," referencing the daily habits of the English daisy, with its petals opening in the day and closing at night. Depending on the species, the daisy can be one of your earliest spring bloomers or among the last to appear in the autumn.

The daisy is actually made up of two flowers. The centre eye—or disc floret—is a collection of tiny florets, while the ray floret (the petals) radiate from the centre, resembling the Sun. Because a daisy is made up of two flowers that work in perfect harmony, they have long been a symbol of true love.

Native to Europe and Africa and eventually naturalized in North America, daisies belong to the aster family (Asteraceae). This is one of the largest plant families, which also includes [sunflowers](#) and, of course, [asters](#).



### Daisy Meanings and Symbolism

- The daisy has long represented innocence, purity, and true love.
- Each colour daisy represents something different. The white daisy symbolizes purity and innocence; yellow means joy and friendship; pink represents affection; and red symbolizes love and romance.
- According to an old Celtic legend, when an infant or child died, the gods would cover the child's grave with daisies to cheer up the parents.
- In Norse mythology, the daisy is the sacred flower of Freyja, the goddess of love, beauty, and fertility. In turn, the daisy became a symbol of motherhood and childbirth, and of new beginnings. Daisies are a common gift for new mothers.
- A Roman myth attributes the creation of the daisy to the nymph Belides, who turned herself into a daisy to escape the affection of Vertumnus, the god of gardens and seasons. The Latin word for Daisy, *bellis*, is derived from the nymph's name.
- It was once thought that a daisy in a bouquet was a sign of one's ability to keep a secret.
- "Daisy" has been used in many phrases over time. "Fresh as a daisy" means someone has had a good night's rest; "oopsy daisy" or "whoops-a-daisy" is said after a mistake or blunder.
- Daisies have been linked to the Virgin Mary because they represent love, innocence, and new beginnings.

The daisy is a flower given between friends to emphasize the keeping of a secret; the daisy means "I'll never tell!"

### The Daisy in History

The daisy family, also known by its scientific name, *Compositae*, was classified by the German botanist Paul Dietrich Giseke in the late 1700s. However, records of daisies date back to 2,200 B.C., when it is believed they were grown in Egyptian gardens and used for medicinal purposes. season.

Daisies have long been associated with medicine. Teas made from daisies are used to treat coughs, bronchitis, and inflammation; wild daisies have been applied to the skin to treat wounds or disease; and King Henry VIII, it has been said, ate daisies to help stomach ulcers.

### **Daisies in the Garden**

Daisies can commonly be found growing in cultivated gardens, as well as lawns, meadows, and along roads. Some species are known to be weeds, so plant with care. The most common garden daisies are the Ox eye, Shasta, Gerbera, and English.

Daisy seeds can be started in the spring, indoors, 6 to 8 weeks before the last frost, or outdoors after the last frost. Plants grown from seed won't bloom until the following season.

### **The Sweet Pea**

The sweet pea (*Lathyrus odoratus*) is part of the Fabaceae family and is related to beans and other legumes. While it is not a crop pea, it is a close relative. Due to its similar look, it's also commonly confused with the everlasting pea. While sweet pea has been used in some areas of the world for medicine and food, unlike its edible garden pea relatives, it is considered toxic to humans and animals.

Native to Italy and the Mediterranean region, sweet peas are beautiful and have a sweet fragrance—often likened to oranges, honey, and jasmine—that can brighten any room.

They are found in a wide range of colours, with hundreds of varieties having been developed over time, and bloom from spring to early summer, depending on the planting region.



### **Sweet Pea Meanings and Symbolism**

In the language of flowers, a bouquet of sweet peas is a way to say goodbye or thank you for a lovely time. It can also mean blissful pleasure, good wishes, kindness, gratitude, and friendship.

- Some English gardeners call them the "Queen of the Annuals."
- In France, the flower has long been a traditional gift for brides, providing good luck on her wedding day and in the marriage.
- At one point, it was worn for strength or to reveal the truth. Sweet peas were also worn in pockets to provide a fragrance to clothing.

In some cultures, the sweet pea was thought to have magical properties.

### **Sweet Peas in History**

Sweet peas were discovered in southern Italy in the late 1600s by Francis Cupani, a Sicilian monk. Cupani is said to have sent seeds from the sweet pea to Dr. Casper Commelin, a botanist in Amsterdam, and Dr. Robert Uvedale, a teacher and plant enthusiast in England, which began its spread around Europe.

In the 1800s, Henry Eckard, a Scottish nursery proprietor, began creating larger, more beautiful, and more colourful sweet pea hybrids. The rest is history!

### **Sweet Peas in the Garden**

Sweet peas are an annual that prefers full Sun and well-drained, rich, organic soil. Depending on the variety, they are climbers that grow from 6 to 10 feet tall. Make sure to give them good support using a trellis, arch, or fence.

In locations where frosts are more regular, plant in the very late winter or early spring when the soil is dry enough to work in. Flowers bloom in the spring, and the plant does not thrive in heat. Seeds can be started indoors before transplanting outside.



My uncle lives in Phoenix, Arizona and for the past few years, I have wanted to find time to go out there and visit him. At the beginning of April, Danny ( my boyfriend) and I went out. For the next 10 days, we lived with him and his beautiful little dog, Revere. Revere is very friendly and overly playful. If he sees you putting your swimming suit on, he gets very excited!

We spent the first few days settling in (and getting used to the 8-hour time difference) and exploring the local area. We visited a ghost town and went out to a tapas restaurant for my uncle's birthday. Thursday was one of the hottest days at 35 degrees so unsurprisingly, we spent a lot of time in the air-conditioned shopping centre followed by an evening of TopGolf.

On Friday morning, we took a 4-hour drive across the desert to the Grand Canyon. No photo can quite capture the magnitude of it. We stayed in a hotel right on the rim looking straight out onto the Canyon. Compared to the 35-degree weather in Phoenix, the temperature drop was quite significant! We woke up early on Saturday morning to see the sunrise at 6 am. If it was down to Danny though, we would have been out there at 5 am he was that excited.



I am not one for following sports (unless it's tennis), but Danny is a football fanatic. Subsequently, we visited the Arizona Cardinals Football stadium, which was more impressive than I was expecting and was where the Super Bowl was held last year. We also watched our first baseball game that evening. The atmosphere was quite something although not as high-scoring as I thought it might have been.



Tuesday morning was another long car ride through the desert to Sedona. Sedona is famous for its red-rock landscape. We took a pink jeep tour which was an off-road adventure. We got the chance to crawl over and atop the formations through the desert terrain. It was very bumpy so holding on was a must!

The last day was another extremely hot one, so we took the chance to hire a speed boat and get out onto the lake. My uncle used to own a boat and so he showed us his tricks and we had a go at driving it ourselves!



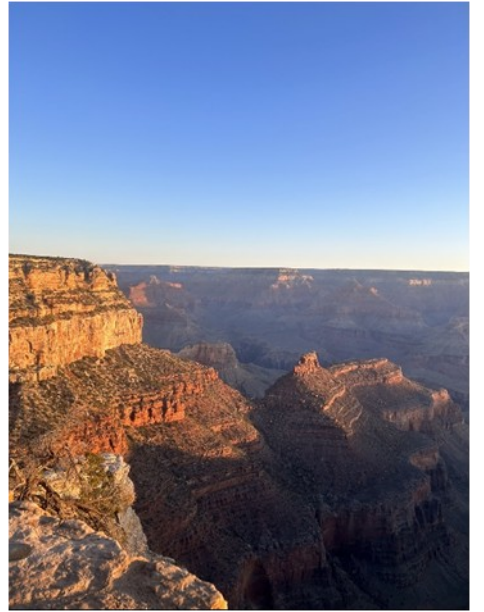
One thing about America is the luxury of not having to be personally insured on each car. We took advantage of this by driving my uncle's car. Neither Danny nor



I have driven anywhere outside of the UK, so this was quite an experience! We were even allowed to drive his Tesla (very very very slowly!). One morning Danny and I drove out to Thunderbird Mountain and hiked up to the top. This was a very early start to not get caught in the hot desert weather! Bearing in mind Danny only passed his driving test in February, he has done very well, having now driven in America alongside getting behind the wheel of a Tesla and a speed boat!

Overall, it was an incredible holiday and we're already planning on going back out there in a few years.

Grace xx





## Thought For The Day



Whilst driving our little VIP to nursery on Wednesday, I am not sure whether it was because the sun WAS ACTUALLY shining (a rare occurrence at the moment!) or whether everything has suddenly come into bloom in this particular area of Leek, but I was stunned by the beauty of the cherry blossom trees on Springfield Road (the road linking Buxton Rd and Ashbourne Rd, where the fire station, ASDA and Leek High School are positioned). Whilst I know this isn't the most picturesque of localities, there is an avenue of cherry trees lining the road there and they are ABSOLUTELY beautiful! So much so, that I felt compelled to take a photograph! I pulled in at the fire station and took a snap, although it didn't really translate since I could only see a fraction of the trees from my position. I have always loved this time of year, especially for the blossom that appears, which provides yet another natural reminder that we live in a spectacularly beautiful world.



This little event got me thinking about the cherry blossom festivals in Japan, how much I would like to see them first hand and how utterly spectacular they must be...

The Japanese tradition of the cherry blossom festival (hanami) is a celebration that is centuries old and consists of holding parties under the short-lived cherry blossoms as they bloom. Cherry blossom festivals are a unique type of celebration, in that the timing of the festivals depends on when the trees blossom. Furthermore, since the flowers only bloom for a very short period — a maximum of two weeks— this means that the country at large has its eye on the trees, ready to burst into celebration as soon as the flowers begin to bloom. Because of this limited window of time, Japanese news stations actually monitor and report on the “Cherry Blossom Front” in what is called “The Blossom Forecast”.

Although the majority of Japanese citizens do not identify as belonging to an organized religion, historically, the two most prominent religions in the country have been Shinto and Buddhism, and these have strongly influenced Japanese culture. The cherry blossom, or “SAKURA”, holds significance within both of these religions. In the case of Shinto, Japan's ethnic religion, sakura are thought to house sacred spirits or forces, whilst the short-lived nature of the cherry blossoms mirrors the great importance of transience in Buddhist doctrine.

Centuries old, the tradition of hanami may have begun as early as the Nara period (710–794 CE). Although modern hanami most commonly focuses around sakura, the original practitioners celebrated under plum trees. This original form of hanami does still take place today but the celebrations are smaller and more low-key than their cherry blossom counterparts.

Although cherry blossom festivals are obviously most common in Japan, the celebration has also caught on further afield, with countries such as Korea, China, Sweden and the USA adopting the traditions. Although the Japanese tradition is called hanami, many of the individual festivals and associated celebrations are named Sakura-Matsuri, literally meaning “cherry blossom tree festival”.

So, whilst Leek and our lovely Staffordshire Moorlands are somewhat different to Japan, and our fabulous Roaches are certainly dissimilar to the great Mount Fuji, we as inhabitants of our world all have something in common—the joy we feel with the arrival of spring— what a glorious time of year!

*Esther x*



**Prayer Corner:**

- Lord, may we bear the fruits of your Spirit:
- give us love, that boundless, healing energy which transforms the world;
- give us joy, because no darkness or evil can overcome you;
- give us peace, to quiet our hearts, and to free us from bitterness;
- give us patience, to go on following you even when it's hard;
- give us kindness, to reach out to our neighbour and to the person who needs to be loved;
- give us goodness, to give with a generous heart and without ulterior motive;
- give us faithfulness, to stay at your side, come what may;
- give us gentleness, to respect the freedom and integrity of others;
- give us self-control, to see our weaknesses and overcome them in your strength.
- Lord, may we bear the fruits of your Spirit.
- Amen.

**Galatians 5:22-23**

Muriel

- April Services:**
- 28th—Morning Prayer KH/MF  
Followed by St Chad's APCM (AGM)
- May Services:**
- 5th - Family service Kath and team
- 12th—Praise and Prayer KH/MF
- 19th— Holy Communion Rev Barry
- 26th—Morning Prayer KH/MF



**Smiles—”Old age jokes”**

Seeing her friend Sally wearing a new locket, Meg asks if there is a memento of some sort inside. "Yes," says Sally, "a lock of my husband's hair."

"But Larry's still alive." "I know, but his hair is gone."

The biggest loser at my weight-loss club was an elderly woman. "How'd you do it?" we asked. "Easy," she said. "Every night I take my teeth out at six o'clock."

Her class assignment was to interview an "old person" about his life, so my niece asked me, "What was the biggest historical event that happened during your childhood?"

"I'd have to say the moonwalk," I replied.

She looked disappointed. "That dance was so important to you?"

One of my fourth graders asked my teacher's assistant, "How old are you, Mrs. Glass?"

"You should never ask an adult's age," I broke in. "That's okay," Harriett said smiling. "I'm fifty."

"Wow, you don't look that old," the boy said. I was breathing a sigh of relief when another child chimed in, "Parts of her do."

An old man and a 20 year old are paired together at a golf tournament. They're playing a long par 5 that dog legs around some tall trees.

As the 20 year old sets up his tee shot to hit onto the fairway the old man notes "when I was your age we used to hit over the trees - not around to the side."

So the 20 year old readjusts and tries to hit over the trees - but can't clear them and loses his ball. He tries again and loses that one too...

Then the old man says "of course, when I was your age, the trees were only 6 foot tall."