

Roses were associated with Mary from early times. Saint Dominic (1221) is credited with the spreading of the familiar devotion called the "Rosary (rosarium) of the Blessed Virgin Mary." The word "rosary" originally meant a rose garden but was later used in the sense of "rose garland." **Three colors are especially consecrated to Mary:**



White Roses are symbols of her *joys*.



Red Roses are emblems of her *sufferings*.



Yellow Roses are heralds of her *glories*.

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Mary's Garden of Flowers



*... Bring flowers of the rarest,
bring blossoms the fairest,
from garden and woodland and hillside and dale;
our full hearts are swelling,
our glad voices telling
the praise of the loveliest flower of the vale!...*

Mary's Garden

In a typical Mary garden the statue of the Madonna occupies a place of honor, either in the center or in a grotto against the wall, with, usually, a birdbath or bubbling fountain built in front of it. Some of the more familiar plants of the many that belong in a typical Mary garden are:



Columbine and Trefoil are said to have sprung forth at the touch of Mary's foot, and consequently bear the popular names Our Lady's shoes or **Our Lady's slippers**.



Marigold, (Mary's bud) has bell-shaped blossoms of vivid yellow. An old legend says, "Her dresses were adorned with **Marigold**." This flower was used to decorate her shrines for the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25) and during the month of May.



Lily-of-the-valley (Our Lady's tears). This delicate flower is still widely used in Germany, there it is called Maiglockchen (**May bells**), to decorate the Mary shrine in churches and homes during the Virgin's month (May).



Foxgloves thrive in moist and shaded places; they blossom in many colors and present a most attractive sight with their clusters of little bells, which were called **Our Lady's Thimbles** in medieval times.



Lily This stately and dignified flower has been associated from ancient times with Jesus and Mary, and is called **Madonna Lily** in many parts of Europe. At Easter its brilliant and fragrant blossoms symbolize the radiance of the Lord's risen life. Later in the year it is used to decorate the shrines of Mary, especially in July, on the Feast of the Visitation. It also is an old traditional symbol of innocence, purity, and virginity.



Rosemary produces delicate and fragrant blossoms of pale blue color in early spring. According to legend, the plant originally bloomed in white; however, it turned blue (**Mary's color**) in reward for the service it offered when Our Lady looked for some bush on which to spread her Child's tiny garments after having washed them on the way to Egypt. The bushes do not grow very tall but as they grow older they spread out and thicken, forming a dense bush. There is an old superstition that "the rosemary passeth not commonly the height of Christ when he was on earth."



Violets are dedicated to Mary as **symbols of her humility**. They are said to have blossomed forth outside her window when she spoke the words, "*Behold, I am a handmaid of the Lord.*" Leaving her, the angel of God blessed the little flowers in passing, thus endowing them with the tenderest and most beautiful fragrance of all plants.