

Labour Day/May Day & Lily of the Valley

My favourite flower is **Lily of the Valley** and although I have a blooming good garden, I have never been able to grow a clump of these to pick, as has been my dream for years. On Labour Day, I met friends for coffee and the café had a vase of this gorgeous flower on the counter.



The local French Group were meeting there and told me the story of France's connection to the plant and I came home and did some research and learned lots of things. I am now inspired to have another go at growing it. Maybe next Spring I will have my dream clump????

Such a delightful peaceful flower it has connections to mother's values, rebirth, renewal and tears. I share these facts with you now as I hope this will bring you peace, renewal & pleasure.
Arohanui (compassion) from Whanganui Compassionate Friends



Lily of the valley is an elegant, dainty flower with clusters of bell-like blooms on a stem. Famous for its sweet smelling fragrance, it is a harbinger of Spring. A well-loved perfume and soap too.

Lily of the valley flower meaning and symbolism.

- ✚ Elegant, dainty, and associated with feminine values of motherhood, sweetness, humility and purity.
- ✚ Symbolic of Spring and renewal.
- ✚ In Victorian times, the flower signified a return of happiness.
- ✚ Tears too. Floral legend says the tears of Eve, as she was banished from the Garden of Eden and Mary as she wept at the Crucifixion were transformed into the lily of the valley flower.
- ✚ Chosen by mums to show the connection and bond they share with their children.
- ✚ May birth flower
- ✚ Floral emblem of Yugoslavia
- ✚ National flower of Finland

Whatever you believe, it's clear that this flower is prized among a multitude of cultures.

In case you want to grow some here in NZ:

Purchase bulbs (pips) in February/ March for flowering in September/ October.

Famed for its sweet perfume, lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*) is a woodland plant, grows in clumps in fertile, humus-rich, moist soil in shade. Pure white bell flowers. Grows best in cold climates, naturalising well under trees. When growth appears, apply liquid fertiliser to promote further good growth.

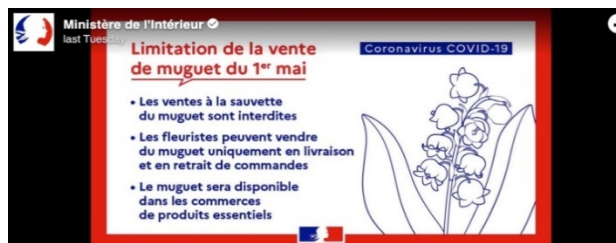
Un brin de muguet

France has a special connection with this flower on May Day (our Labour Day holiday)



Every year May Day in France is all about two things: **muguet**, pronounced “moo-gay” (lily of the valley in English) and Labour Day. It is the tradition to celebrate by giving each other “un brin de muguet” (a sprig of lily-of-the-valley) for luck. This dates from when King Charles IX was given a *muguet* for good fortune on 1st May 1561. He so loved the idea that he gave them to his courtiers as good luck charms and, hence, *La Fête du Muguet* was born. The idea found popularity and is now a tradition for men to offer a muguet to loved ones and sweethearts as a token of devotion and love. The flowers were also made into buttonhole sprigs for men to wear. Streets of France are flooded with flower vendors so that the tradition of giving lilies to family and friends can live on. BUT maybe not in 2020

Sadly, with Coronavirus at large, selling in the street is forbidden. People will no doubt find ways to continue this loved tradition – maybe on line. People lucky enough to have it in their gardens will leave a sprig by their neighbour’s door: taking all the necessary precautions... it’s a good-luck charm to warm up more than one heart at such a trying time.



Here's some French for fun

- 🇫🇷 Le mois de mai – The month of May.
- 🇫🇷 Le muguet – lily-of-the-valley (pronounced “mu gay”)
- 🇫🇷 Un brin de muguet- a sprig of lily-of-the-valley
- 🇫🇷 Un bouquet de muguet– a bunch of lily-of-the-valley
- 🇫🇷 Un pot de muguet- a pot of lily-of-the-valley
- 🇫🇷 Offrir – to give as a gift
- 🇫🇷 Offrir du muguet – to give some lily-of-the-valley
- 🇫🇷 Un porte-bonheur – a good luck charm
- 🇫🇷 Joyeux Premier Mai – Happy May Day
- 🇫🇷 Joyeuse fête du travail – Happy Labour Day
- 🇫🇷 Joyeuse fête des mères – Happy Mother’s Day