

Bell County Master Gardeners

Tip of the Week

By Candy Mullen

“Mother’s Day Flowers”

Mother's Day is intended to be a day to celebrate motherhood. Many churches and families in the United States recognize the second Sunday in May to honor mothers. As gardeners we have certain flowers with which we associate Mother's Day in the bouquets we gather.

In America, many families celebrate the day with gifts of carnations, colored if the mother is living and white if she is deceased. In Australia, traditionally, the Chrysanthemum is given to mothers for mother's day as the flower is naturally in season during Autumn in the southern hemisphere and ends in 'mum', a common affectionate shortening of 'mother' in Australia. Of course, pink flowers are associated with women so actually any choice is acceptable; just pick your “mum’s” favorite!

The first known suggestion of Mother's Day in the United States was in 1872 by Julia Ward Howe. She suggested that people observe the day on June 2 as a day dedicated to peace. Others around the country campaigned for a Mother's Day including Mary Towles Sasseen, Frank E. Hering, and Anna Jarvis. In 1908, Anna Jarvis of West Virginia began a campaign for a nationwide observance of Mother's Day. She chose the second Sunday in May and started the custom of wearing a carnation. It became the custom that if a person wore a colored carnation, their mother was living and a white carnation signified that their mother had passed away. That initial custom still is used today!

In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed a joint resolution of Congress recommending that Congress and the Executive Branch of government recognize the observance of Mother's Day. In America we celebrate the day on the second Sunday in May as Anna Jarvis had suggested. It falls in spring when many of the flowers are blooming and renewing the Earth with the rebirth of life after a winter.

Mother's Day actually is celebrated around the world in many different countries. It may not be on the same day as ours but sometime during the year, the countries will have a day honoring the mother. Because she gives birth, nurtures, and guides the future of each country, the mother is honored with flowers, speeches, ceremonies and usually dinner or lunch out, perhaps even breakfast in bed! And of course, flowers are always a big part of that celebration.

Have any questions about gardening in Central Texas? Contact ask.bcmga@gmail.com