

National & Culturally Important Plants of Commonwealth Countries: Europe & Americas

AMERICAS



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

The **Dagger Log**, **Batta Log** or **Dagger Pole** is the national plant of the islands. It has a rosette of succulent leaves and a tall flower spike when it flowers. Fishing rafts were once made from its stems. The **Whitewood** is an ornamental shade tree. The hard wood was once used for making gun carriages.

Agave karatto (National Plant)

Bucida buceras (National Tree)



BAHAMAS

The **Yellow Elder** is the national plant and the **Lignum vitae** or 'tree of life' is the national tree. The Lignum vitae is celebrated for its medicinal uses and its dense, strong wood which has been used throughout the world for centuries. Lignum vitae is also the national plant of Jamaica.

Tecoma stans (National Plant)

Guaiacum sanctum (National Tree)



BARBADOS

The **Pride of Barbados** is a beautiful plant of the pea family, native to the tropics and subtropics of the Americas but grown all over the world. It is featured on the Queen's personal flag of Barbados.

Caesalpinia pulcherrima (National Plant)



BELIZE

The beautiful black orchid of Belize is very dark blue with purple veins but looks black in the shade of the forests where it grows. It is also known as the cockleshell orchid. It is protected from collection. The Mahogany is the national tree of Belize and features on the coat of arms with the motto 'under the shade I flourish'.

Prosthechea cochleata (National Plant)

Swietenia macrophylla (National Tree)



CANADA

The leaf of the **Maple tree** is the national symbol of Canada. The regions of Canada also have their own floral symbols such as the Lady Slipper for Prince Edward Island and the Pitcher Plant for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Acer saccharum



DOMINICA

The **Caribwood** or **Bwa Kwaib** was chosen as the national plant of Dominica in 1978. It is said to represent the strength and resilience and continuity of the people of Dominica. It grows only in Dominica and its bright red flowers can be seen from a long distance.

Poitea carinalis (or *Sabinea carinalis*) (National Plant)



GRENADA

The beautiful purple Bougainvillea is the national plant of Grenada and is native to South America. Bougainvillea are grown throughout the world and have become naturalised and been adopted as the national plant in Zambia and Guam.

Bougainvillea species (National Plant)



GUYANA

The spectacular Victoria Regia water lily is the national plant of Guyana. It is the largest of the water lilies and its leaves can be 3 meters in diameter. It was named in honour of Queen Victoria and many specimens are grown in Botanic Gardens around the world. The structure of the leaves is said to have inspired Paxton's design for the Crystal Palace. It features on the coat of arms of Guyana.

Victoria amazonica (National Plant)



JAMAICA

The **Lignum vitae** or 'tree of life' is indigenous to the Caribbean and derives its name from its medicinal properties. The strong, dense, self-lubricating wood has been used to make a range of objects from musical instruments, to cricket balls to British police truncheons. It was exported to Europe from the start of the 16th century and is now strongly protected against over collection.

Guaiacum sanctum (National Plant)



SAINT CHRISTOPHER (KITTS) & NEVIS

The **Red Royal Poinciana** or **Flame Tree** or **Flamboyant** is the national tree of Saint Kitts and Nevis. It is found wild in the forests of Madagascar but is cultivated all over the world. It was once given the scientific name *Poinciana* in honour of the 17th century governor of Saint Kitts, Phillippe de Longvilliers de Poincy. It is endangered in its native habitat in Madagascar.
Delonix regia (National Plant)



SAINT LUCIA

The **rose and marguerite** are the national flowers of Saint Lucia chosen in 1985, **bamboo** is the national plant and the **Calabash** is the national tree. Calabash trees are native to the Caribbean and parts of the Americas. The pulp of the fruit is used medicinally and the shell is used for containers and cups.
Crescentia cujete (National Plant)



SAINT VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

The **Soufriere Tree** is a species found only in Saint Vincent. A specimen was reported to have been collected on the Soufriere volcana in 1804 by Dr. Anderson curator of the Botanic Garden before the 1812 eruption. An old specimen is still growing in the gardens along with younger trees.
*Spachea perforata*s (National Tree)



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

The **Pride of Trinidad and Tobago** is the national plant of the islands and generally flowers on their Independence Day (31st of August). It is also know as Wild Pointsettia or *Chaconia Warszewiczia coccinea* (National Plant)

EUROPE



CYPRUS

The **Cyprus Cyclamen** grows only in the moutains of Cyprus and was chosen as the national flower. Cyclamens are prized all over the world as garden plants. The national tree of Cyprus is the **Golden Oak** which again grows wild only in Cyprus in mountain forests.
Cyclamen cyprium (National Flower)
Quercus alnifolia (National Tree)



MALTA

The Maltese Centaury or Widnet il-Bahar grows only in Malta and was chosen as the national plant in 1973. It grows on cliffs and coastal valleys and is threatened by habitat loss.
Cheirolophus crassifolius (National Plant)



UNITED KINGDOM (ENGLAND)

The floral symbol of England is usually given as the white rose or sometimes as the red and white Tudor rose. The Tudor rose was a combination of the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster.

Rosa species



UNITED KINGDOM (NORTHERN IRELAND)

The plant symbol of Ireland is the well known shamrock. Various species have been suggested but it is generally believed to refer to one of the clovers.

Trifolium repens or Trifolium dubium



UNITED KINGDOM (SCOTLAND)

The thistle has been used as a national symbol in Scotland for centuries. It first appeared on a Scottish coin of James III in 1470. There are many candidates for the particular species of the Scottish national thistle but the debate still goes on.



UNITED KINGDOM (WALES)

Both the Leek and the Daffodil are recognised as national plants of Wales. Saint David is reported to have ordered his Welsh soldiers to wear a leek to identify themselves in battle against the Saxons. The daffodil is known as 'Peter's Leek'. The daffodil or leek are worn on Saint David's Day (1st of March)