

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY LEGEND

Today is February 14th and many folks will celebrate Saint Valentine's Day by giving flowers, cards, and candy. Not too mention having intimate dinners, spending time with loved ones, going to parties, and giving other special gifts to friends; but who was the real Valentine and why is this most romantic of holidays named after him?

The legend of Valentine's Day is said to have originated during the third century in Rome, under the reign of Emperor Claudius II. During his reign, Claudius decided that single men made better soldiers, so he outlawed marriage for young men to keep them focused and away from potential familial distractions. A young priest named Valentine decided the law was unjust and began defying the Emperor's decree by continuing to perform marriages for young lovers in secret.

Claudius eventually discovered Valentine's actions, had him arrested and soon after sentenced to death. During his time in jail, Valentine fell in love with his jailer's daughter, who visited him in prison. Before he was put to death, Valentine sent a letter to the girl signed "from Your Valentine", the basic expression we still use every year during this holiday. Valentine was executed on February 14, 270 AD.

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THE WORLD



For centuries, flowers have long symbolized fertility, love, marriage, and romance, but the romantic history of giving your loved one Valentine's Day flowers comes from the old-fashioned custom of sending floral bouquets to pass on non-verbal messages. Introduced in the 18th century by Charles II of Sweden, each flower had a specific meaning attached to it, making it possible to have an entire conversation using only flowers. Today, people continue to send flowers on special occasions or to express sentiments of love and admiration. Here's a great visual guide for the meaning of rose colors to enjoy. It may even help a few folks pick the perfect color flowers to let their Valentine know how they feel about them.

The Meaning of Rose Colors

- **Red:** Love, Beauty, Courage and Respect
- **White:** Purity, Innocence, Youthfulness
- **Pink:** Appreciation, Grace, Perfect Happiness
- **Light Pink:** Admiration, Sympathy, Sweetness
- **Yellow:** Joy, Friendship, Welcome Back
- **Yellow with Red Tip:** Falling in Love
- **Orange:** Desire, Enthusiasm
- **Red and White:** Given together these signify unity
- **Peach:** Appreciation, Gratitude
- **Pale Peach:** Modesty
- **Coral:** Desire
- **Lavender:** Love at first sight, Enchantment
- **Orange:** Fascination
- **Blue:** The unattainable, the impossible
- **Red Rosebud:** Symbolic of purity and loveliness
- **White Rosebud:** Symbolic of girlhood

A grid of 12 small images showing different colored roses. The roses are arranged in a 3x4 grid. The colors include yellow, pink, light pink, yellow with red tip, orange, red and white, peach, pale peach, coral, lavender, orange, blue, red rosebud, and white rosebud. Each image shows a single rose in its respective color, set against a dark background.

GLOBAL WARMING

Glaciers are melting, sea levels are rising, cloud forests are dying, and wildlife is scrambling to keep pace. It has become clear that humans have caused most of the past century's warming by releasing heat-trapping gases as we power our modern lives. Called greenhouse gases, their levels are higher now than at any time in the last 800,000 years.

Climate change encompasses not only rising average temperatures but also extreme weather events, shifting wildlife populations and habitats, rising seas, and a range of other impacts. All of those changes are emerging as humans continue to add heat-trapping greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, changing the rhythms of climate that all living things have come to rely on.



The "greenhouse effect" is the warming that happens when [certain gases in Earth's atmosphere trap heat](#). These gases let in light but keep heat from escaping, like the glass walls of a greenhouse, hence the name.

Human activity isn't the only factor that affects Earth's climate. Volcanic eruptions and variations in solar radiation from sunspots, solar wind, and the Earth's position relative to the sun also play a role.

But climate models that scientists use to monitor Earth's temperatures take those factors into account. Changes in solar radiation levels as well as [minute particles suspended in the atmosphere from volcanic eruptions](#), for example, have contributed only about two percent to the recent warming effect. The balance comes from greenhouse gases and other [human-caused factors, such as land use change](#).

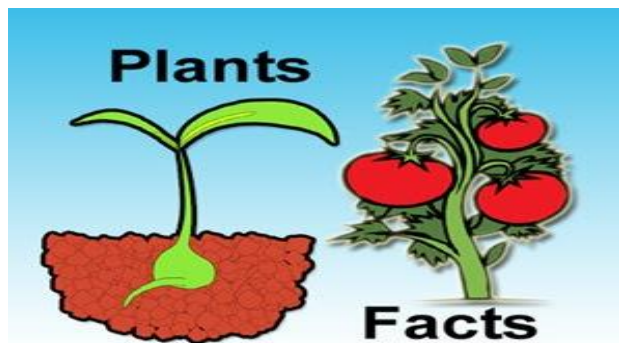
The short timescale of this recent warming is singular as well. [Volcanic eruptions](#), for example, emit particles that temporarily cool the Earth's surface. But their effect lasts just a few years. Events like El Niño also work on fairly short and predictable cycles. On the other hand, the types of global temperature fluctuations that have contributed to ice ages occur on a cycle of hundreds of thousands of years.

For thousands of years now, emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere have been balanced out by greenhouse gases that

are naturally absorbed. As a result, greenhouse gas concentrations and temperatures have been fairly stable, which has allowed human civilization to flourish within a consistent climate.



INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT PLANTS



- Tree resin which has been fossilized is known as amber, it sometimes contains plant material or small animals that were trapped inside.
- Some plants are carnivores, gaining nutrients by eating various small insects and spiders. A well known example of a carnivorous plant is the Venus Flytrap.
- Bamboo can be a fast growing plant, some types can grow almost a metre (3.28 feet) in just one day!
- While using energy from sunlight, plants turn carbon dioxide into food in a process called photosynthesis.
- Around 2000 different types of plants are used by humans to make food.
- Onions might taste good but they can be painful to chop. A gas is released when

you cut onions that irritates you eyes, the tears you produce while this happens are your body's way of washing it from your eyes.

- In the agricultural industry, to ensure crops of food grow well water is often added to soil in the form of irrigation.
- Plant matter found at the bottom of areas with water such as swamps can eventually turn into coal due to a process called metamorphosis (changing form).
- There are over 200,000 identified plant species and the list is growing all the time.
- Poison ivy produces a skin irritant called urushiol. Touching poison ivy will cause an allergic reaction, usually in the form of an itchy rash on the skin.
- Fertilizers are chemicals added to plants to help them grow. Important elements in fertilizers include nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Manure (animal waste) is also used as a fertilizer.

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