

# *History of the "Nosegay" or "Tussie Mussie"*

## *The Victorian Language of Flowers*



Have you ever received flowers for your birthday or Mother's Day? Have you ever picked up some flowers for yourself, just because? Have you ever received flowers from someone and learned there was a secret meaning behind them? Well, during the Victorian Era, (Queen Victoria's reign 1837-1901), there were many customs and rules, as well as expected behaviors, such as no flirtations, no questions, or conversations between others in the upper class and this is where flowers were used to send messages.

Flowers were created in perfect little well thought artistic plan. Perfect little bundles of fragrant herbs with a single flower in the center became a very popular gift. These are known as Tussie Mussie or nosegay bouquets. A 'Tussie Mussie' is a little bouquet also known as a "talking bouquet", that was used to send secretive messages of interest, affection and love, as well as other messages. Though the use of flowers had been used in Persia and the Middle East, the Victorian Era had many publications of flower dictionaries. This is what began the tradition of giving tussie mussie bouquets in England and very quickly became popular.

This was the time period when plants began to really have special meaning, making it possible to send special or subtle messages and thus the Language of Flowers came to be. Flowers and plants were used to communicate during the time when conversations were restricted for a variety of reasons. A list of the flowers and their meanings grew with the use of floriography dictionaries and began being published. This was called Floriography; The Language of Flowers. Not everyone accepted the meanings the same, as there were so many books and dictionaries with different meanings. So people usually included a little list of the meanings.

This was a time of etiquette, a time where doors were opened for ladies. Even men relayed messages to each other by use of tussie mussie. This brought about artistic expression. Floriography commonly relayed meanings that were handed down from myths and legends, as well as fables. Sometimes, meanings were made up to suit an occasion. The little hand held fragrant bouquets were often wrapped in lace doilies. People took great care in creating their special little "talking bouquets". It was so important that the writers and lovers used the same text when interpreting the language of flowers meanings. This way there were no misunderstandings amongst one another.

If I were to make a 'tussie mussie', I would give one to my husband, so that I may send a message of love and appreciation, in the hopes that he would know and realize that my love for him grows deeper and deeper every day, and that he is my best friend and lover and I love the way he loves me; our love is never-ending.

In my bouquet, I would include:



Honeysuckle, (*Alcea*), which means “devotion”. I chose this so my husband understands that I am devoted to him and our marriage.



Baby’s Breath, (*Gypsophila paniculata*), which means “everlasting love”. I chose this because we both adore one another and we believe that our love will last forever and beyond our days of living.



Red Rose, (*Rosa*), which means “love”. I chose this to show my husband that I love him so much.



Bellflower, (*Campanula*), which means “gratitude”. I chose this to show my husband that I appreciate all that he is and all that he does and I am so grateful for the way he loves me and our beautiful family.



Phlox, (*Phlox*), which means “our souls are united”. I chose this to show my husband that I love that he sees us as soul mates and I agree.



White Rose, (*Rosa*), which means “marriage, spirituality, purity a heart”. I chose this to show my husband I believe in our pure and loving marriage.

What a beautiful way to bestow love. I can definitely see how a nosegay could be transformed into a flower essence blend, because the meanings behind the flowers bring so much to the emotions. When your emotions are healthy and wholesome, then your body tends to also be more wholesome and healthy. I am loving this form of beautiful and spiritual healing! What kind of nosegay would you make for your loved ones or friends?