

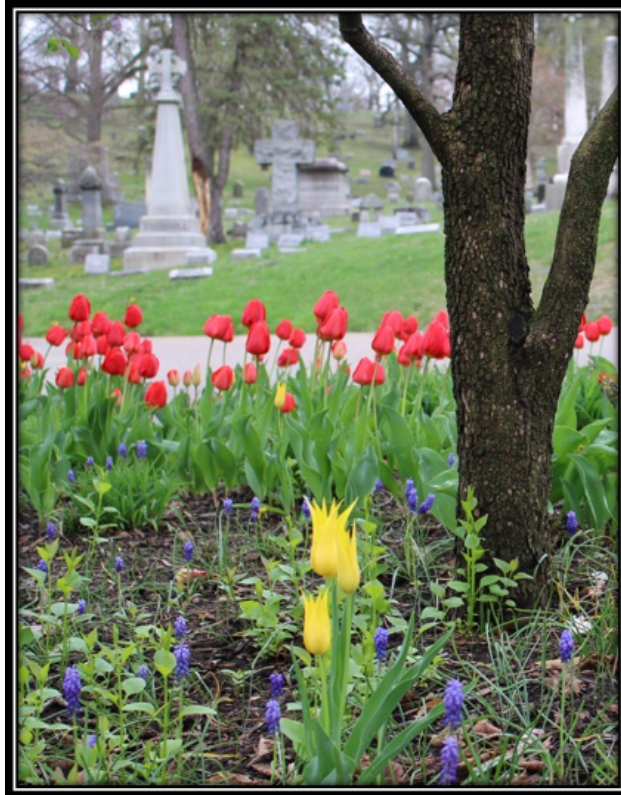


SINCE

1841

# WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



## Say it With Flowers:

### Victorian Flower Language

Plants, and particularly their blossoms, have reminded us of the beauty and brevity of life from ancient times through the modern day.

There is a wealth of evidence that the Egyptians were decorating with flowers as early as 2,500 BCE, and some evidence that the practice began even earlier in human history. Their uses would seem pretty familiar to us today—arrangements were used during burials, processions, and simply as table decorations. Even in art, plants and flowers appear on carved stone reliefs and wall decorations. Just like today, which flowers were selected for each occasion depended on their symbolic meaning and religious significance.

The Victorian era, between 1820-1914, saw the beginning of the garden cemetery (like Woodland) and an obsession with assigning a variety of meanings to particular plants and flowers. These were largely drawn from earlier myths and ancient traditions, and adapted to the majority Christian ideology. Grave markers from this period are rich with floral symbolism, and garden cemeteries like Woodland often include these plants intentionally.

Here are some plants and flowers a visitor may find at Woodland, both as live specimens and carved into stone:

## Acanthus

*Acanthus mollis*: "Bear's Breeches" or "Sea Holly"



Acanthus is native to the Mediterranean and Asia, is commonly called "Bear's Breeches".

It is occasionally planted in ornamental gardens, and blooms white or light purple. This plant is more popular in architecture—it traditionally adorns the capitals of Corinthian columns. Its first recorded use was in the 5th century BCE, when, as the story goes, the sculptor Callimachus was inspired to use the leaves of the Acanthus plant after seeing them covering the grave of a young girl. They are said to symbolize the "prickly" journey from life to death, and for Christians, the final triumph of eternal life.

# Buds or Seedpods



Especially when broken, call to mind the fragility of early life and the passage of time. This type of imagery almost always denotes a child's grave, and is often, though not always, depicting a rosebud. It is often a reference to a 17th century poem by Robert Herrick; "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may."



# Calla Lillies

*Zantedeschia aethiopica*

Particularly associated with mourning and funerals, Calla Lillies were used mostly on the graves of women in the Victorian era. They are said to symbolize majesty, purity, and resurrection. Native to South Africa, the Calla Lily arrived in the United States at the beginning of the 19th century and was quickly adopted. They are grown as ornamental perennials and for cut flowers, though they are toxic if eaten.





## Daffodils

Narcissus



Daffodils have a rich symbolic history—they are the flower of both the Underworld and of Paradise. They grow wild in the Mediterranean and North Africa as well as in gardens around the world. According to Greek myth, Hades, the god of the Underworld, used daffodils to lure the goddess Persephone. She was picking the flowers, so did not see Hades waiting to kidnap her.



Daffodils are also associated with the myth of Narcissus, mourning, or misfortune (because their heads tilt downward). In Christian symbolism, the daffodil is linked with Easter—rebirth, regeneration, and new beginnings.

## Ferns

Polypodiopsida or Polypodiophyta



One of the oldest plants on planet earth, ferns live in a wide variety of habitats—from mountains to deserts, forests and open fields. In general, they specialize in marginal habitats where the environment limits the success of other plants.

Pteridomania was a Victorian era craze which involved fern collecting and fern motifs in decorative art "appearing on everything from christening presents to gravestones and memorials." The fashion for growing ferns indoors led to the development of the Wardian case, a glazed cabinet that could maintain the necessary humidity.

The fern symbolizes sincerity, humility, and sorrow.

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## Thank You!



Throughout this past year, many of you have given to the Woodland Arboretum Foundation, and we thank you sincerely.

Your generosity helps us to preserve, protect, and share the treasures of Woodland Cemetery with our friends and neighbors.

Established for the express purpose of creating a tranquil, picturesque cemetery landscape, Woodland has been a conservator of Dayton history for over 175 years.

With more than 112,000 souls entrusted to our care, it is the final resting place of many of Dayton's most distinguished residents. Additionally, Woodland remains an active cemetery, serving over 1,600 burial and cremation families annually.

Woodland is proud to remain an active part of the Dayton community as a popular place to walk, relax and enjoy.

We invite you to contribute to the Woodland Arboretum Foundation to ensure that what's meaningful to you today, continues tomorrow! Your gift makes an immediate impact on the horticulture, arboriculture, and restoration efforts needed to maintain one of Dayton's most historic and beautiful outdoor museums.

Thank you for your generous support of Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum.

**DONATE ONLINE!**

## Share Your Story With Us!



Here at Woodland, we love to share stories of those who rest within our grounds.

It is most often thanks to family members or newspaper articles that those stories reach us, which allows us to include their loved ones in features like this.

Does your relative have a story we should be telling? Let us know by sending an email to [ashimp@woodlandcemetery.org](mailto:ashimp@woodlandcemetery.org)

## Come Visit Us!



### Volunteer opportunities

Woodland is seeking volunteers to give presentations to community groups on subjects such as local history, notable biographies, and trees.

Not into public speaking? Consider getting involved with our horticulture team, or assisting with special events & research projects.

\*If there is something you'd like to see here at Woodland please reach out to us & suggest it!

## Office Hours:

Monday-Friday  
8am-5pm

If you need help finding where someone is buried, need directions to a particular area, or have questions about pre-planning or funeral services, Woodland's Staff is here to assist you!

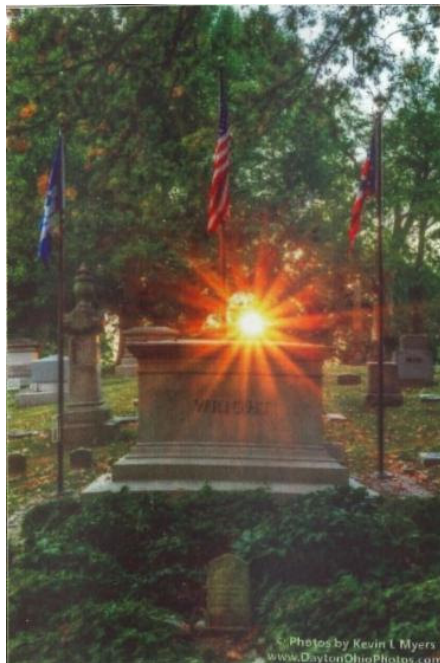
## Tours & More:

We welcome walkers, runners, and wanderers -- leashed dogs & school groups.

**Register for a guided tour:** visit the Woodland Cemetery website! Learn about fascinating Daytonians resting peacefully in one of America's oldest rural garden cemeteries!

Or check out our virtual tours! (if you really don't want to go outside)

**DONATE ONLINE!**



Photos by Kevin L. Myers  
www.DaytonOhioPhotos.com



**WOODLAND**

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM

Committed to providing dignified and caring funeral services and burial options to families of all faiths since 1841.

### **Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum**

118 Woodland Ave.  
Dayton, OH 45409  
woodlandcemetery.org

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For information call 937-228-3221 or e-mail [info@woodlandcemetery.org](mailto:info@woodlandcemetery.org)

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