

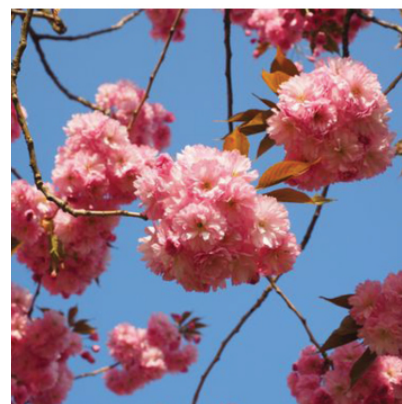
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JAPANESE CHERRY

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The Japanese cherry tree might not produce cherries but it certainly radiates exquisite beauty. The delicate white and pink flowers blossom before the leaves, turning the tree into one glorious bouquet. In Japan the brief period during which the *sakura* (cherry trees) blossom has been celebrated at *Hanami* festivals since the eighth century. At this centuries-old tradition, people from all walks of life come together to picnic and drink sake (Japanese rice wine) under the blooming cherry trees. The flowers are extremely delicate and even the slightest breath of wind can blow their petals away. The transience of the blossom is seen as a metaphor for mortality and the acceptance of destiny. Life is beautiful but short. The fact that a Japanese cherry tree lives approximately the same length of time as man (70 years) and too, can fade away from one day to the next only strengthens this symbolism. But, do not fear, if the thought of death distresses you, bear in mind that the essential oil from the Japanese cherry tree is an excellent treatment for stress. Like so often in nature, the cure can be found close to the cause.



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