

# Plants in Great Britain

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National symbols of the UK  
(plants)

*of the UK*

England



Scotland



Wales

Northern  
Ireland

# England

The **Tudor rose (the Rose of England)** was adopted as a national emblem of England around the time of the Wars of the Roses (1455-1485) as a symbol of peace. It is a syncretic symbol in that it merged the white rose of the royal house of York and the red rose of the royal house of Lancaster. As such, it is seen on the dress uniforms of the Yeomen Warders at the Tower of London, and of the Yeomen of the Guard. It featured on the British Twenty Pence coin.



# Scotland

The thistle has been the national emblem since it was adopted by King James III, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the language of flowers, the thistle (like the burr) is an ancient Celtic symbol of nobility of character as well as of birth, for the wounding or provocation of a thistle yields punishment. For this reason the thistle is the symbol of the Order of the Thistle, a high chivalric order of Scotland.



***Thistle***

# Wales

The **daffodil** and the **leek** are symbols of Wales. The origins of the leek can be traced to the 16th century, while the daffodil became popular in the 19th century, encouraged by David Lloyd-George. There are many explanations of how the leek came to be adopted as the national emblem of Wales. One is that St David advised the Welsh, on the eve of battle with the Saxons, to wear leeks in their caps to distinguish friend from foe. As Shakespeare records in Henry V, the Welsh archers wore leeks at the battle of Agincourt in 1415.

And the daffodil is traditionally worn on St David's Day each 1 March.



# Northern Ireland

The national flower of Northern Ireland is the **shamrock**, a three-leaved plant similar to clover. An Irish tale tells of how Patrick used the three-leaved shamrock to explain the Trinity. He used it in his sermons to represent how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit could all exist as separate elements of the same entity. His followers adopted the custom of wearing a shamrock on his feast day.



- 2. Complete the sentences.
- 1) The thistle has been the national emblem since it was adopted by \_\_\_\_\_, in the \_\_\_\_ century.
- 2) It is a \_\_\_\_\_ symbol in that it merged the \_\_\_\_\_ of the royal house of York and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the royal house of Lancaster.
- 3) The national flower of \_\_\_\_\_ is the \_\_\_\_\_, a three-leaved plant similar to clover.
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ are symbols of Wales.
- 5) In the language of flowers, \_\_\_\_\_ (like the burr) is an ancient \_\_\_\_\_ symbol of nobility of character.
- 6) The Tudor rose (the Rose of England) was adopted as a national emblem of \_\_\_\_\_ around the time of the \_\_\_\_\_ (1455-1485) as a symbol of peace.

- **3. Write sentences by putting the words in order.**
- 1) It/ is /a /symbol /in /it /merged / syncretic /that /the/ white/ rose /of /the /house /royal /of/ York /and /the/rose /of /the /royal/ house/ of/ Lancaster /red .
- 2) Language/ in /the/ the/ thistle /of/ flowers /like /the /burr/ is/ an / nobility/ of /character/ ancient/ Celtic /symbol /of.
- 3) The/ flower/ national /of /Ireland/ is /the/ a/ three-leaved/ plant /similar/ shamrock/ to clover /Northern .
- 4) Wales/ the /and /the /are /symbols/of /daffodil /leek.
- 5) The/ thistle/ the/ national / has/ been /emblem /since /it /was/ adopted /by/ III/ in /the /15th/ century /King/James.