

Hunt & Gather an April Bouquet

By Marcia Harmon of Cottage Jewel Antiques

While bright daffodils may be the only thing blooming in your garden, consider the rainbow of flower alternatives available at the Point. Flora and fauna are the ideal seasonal collectible that will never fall out of fashion or favor. From 19thC hand-painted Staffordshire porcelains and vintage transfer plates, to a full array of antique glass, enamel, metal, ivory, Bakelite, sterling and carved wood there is a flower option for every collector. Accessorizing your home and wardrobe with flowers adds casual splendor to your day! The flower of the month is “Sweet Pea” which blooms constantly and thus guarantees lasting pleasure. According to Victorian floriography, the sweet pea’s riotous, curly tendrils and richly colored blooms are an emblem of careless luxury.

If casual fun suits your style, then hunt for the big painted enamel Flower Power pins from the 1960’s or the whimsical carved wood and bone brooches of the 1940’s. For the more refined collector, the colorful glass Tutti Frutti necklaces of the 1930’s are a rare find in good condition, fun to wear and a safe investment. The delicate glass lampwork components come in flower, fruit, leaf and bird motifs clustered together in beaded chokers. These sculptured works of art are usually attributed to Italian artisans but the Bohemians developed their own version of glass flowers and the French followed with pastel plastic assemblages. Venetian artisans are credited with perfecting millefiore (a thousand flowers) mosaic glass beads in the early 1800’s and expanding international trade with the Africans and Native American Indians who loved the rich colors and multi-layered details of the millefiore beads. These hand crafted trade beads are sometimes mistaken for cloisonné which is an enameling technique on a metal foundation rather than a gathering of glass cane flowers.

For those who covet the finest enameling as seen in Cartier’s Mystery Clocks and the Faberge jeweled eggs, gather a cluster of *guilloche* French enameled brooches as shown here. The French mastered this labor intensive technique of high-fired transparent colored enamel applied repeatedly over a machine-engraved patterned metal background. Ornate engraved sterling or gold mounts became lace pins, sash and bouquet pins in the *belle époque* (beautiful era) around the turn of the century. Finely cut gold flowers were inlaid in some of these enameled masterpieces that can still be found today for less than one hundred dollars.

Bold Art Deco and Retro Moderne costume jewelry often featured large scale painted pot metal and paste bouquets and floral basket themes. Plus the butterflies, dragonflies, bees and spiders that love to buzz around your garden have been favorite clothing ornaments since the Art Nouveau period. *If your hunt for the perfect Spring bouquet, brings you to Danville, then visit Cottage Jewel. www.CottageJewel.com*

A Meaningful Month - April

Birthstone: Diamond

Flower: Sweet Pea

“thanks for a lovely time”