

NATIONAL FLOWER



Related to the daisy, the cornflower is a small, slender, annual plant with distinctive blue flowers that are highly valued both by gardeners and florists. It has an upright, often branched, stem; lower leaves are long, narrow, and split into irregular lobes, while upper leaves are smaller and more symmetrical. The leaves and stem are grayish green, with fine gray hairs. The flowers grow at the ends of the stems and are composed of rings of large "ray" florets surrounding a centralized cluster of "disk" florets. The ray florets are bright blue, and the disk florets are a deep purplish color. The emblematic blue color of the cornflower is due to the pigment protocyanin.

The people of Estonia chose the cornflower as a national symbol in 1968. This flower also has the nickname "bachelor's button"; and it refers to the old practice of a cornflower being worn by some men in one of the buttonholes on their suit. This indicates they are in love, or they are ready for courting. In folklore, if the flower faded too quickly, it was taken as a sign that the man's love was not returned.