



April – Flower Power

By Marcia Harmon, Cottage Jewel

Only the daffodils are blooming in my home garden, but my shop is overflowing in floral delights...from hand-painted Staffordshire porcelains to a full array of antique glass, enamel, metal, mosaic, ivory, Bakelite, sterling, and even carved wood flora and fauna. 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 dust off one of 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. They are 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 on Cartier's Mystery Clocks

and the Faberge jeweled eggs on exhibit at the Legion of Honor in San Francisco, gather a cluster of guilloche French enameled brooches (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 costume jewelry from the 1930's and 1940's features huge painted pot metal and paste bouquet and floral basket themes. Plus the butterflies, dragonflies, bees and spiders that love to buzz around your garden have been favorite ornaments since the Art Nouveau period.

For gifts, workshops and tips on how to wear the old jewels in a contemporary way, visit downtown Danville 100 Prospect Ave or www.CottageJewel.com.

A Meaningful Month
April
 Birthstone: Diamond
 Flower: Sweet Pea,
 "Thanks for a lovely time"