

**THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER  
NEVER FORGET GARDEN**

**proposed by,**

**THE SOCIETY OF THE HONOR GUARD  
TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER**



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## **Subject:**

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Never Forget Garden is a nationwide invitation to all Americans and freedom loving people to plant gardens as a visual way to represent America's unwavering commitment to our sacred duty to recognize, remember, and honor our veterans and their families now and for many years to come.

## **Proposal:**

To invite federal, state, regional, local governments, individuals, and private sector organizations, to recognize and remember all those who have and will serve and sacrifice on behalf of America and their families. We seek to recognize, and recommend, nationwide the unifying effect the language that flowers offers in expressing the profound emotions of patriotism, remembrance and love. The languages of music, prose and poetry offer unique ways to express and communicate love for America, patriotism and remembrance. So too with the language of flowers.

The Society views the Centennial of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as an opportunity for individuals, communities, gardening clubs, garden architects, seed and plant vendors and government elements to express our profound love, sorrow, respect, and gratitude in those who have served and sacrificed on behalf of America and their families. Every flower, plant, or tree will be a symbol of love and act of unity. In the timeless language of flowers, they will quietly trumpet the message that must never weaken: America's sacred commitment to never, ever, forget or forsake our veterans or the principles that define us as Americans. Any time that we pause to remember those who have served and sacrificed on behalf of America could not be more serious. On that day, in that place, will be the time to reflect and remember. A day when personal grief and love for country go hand in hand.

For something that is often very small, a flower has the ability to provoke intensely strong emotions. Flowers bring joy and give comfort to those who grieve. We give flowers to the mother of a new-born child to welcome him or her to the world. We include flowers as we celebrate birthdays, weddings and other special occasions. We also place flowers on the coffins of our loved ones as part of our final farewell. Few things in this world have the power to express our emotions and matters of the heart.

The growing of flowers, plants, or trees is a very personal experience in a very personal space. Visiting a cemetery or memorial with flowers is a common and beautiful way to remember and express our love, respect and gratitude – but for those who want to express their love of Country in a more private space, to bring that beauty home, we invite the creation of a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Never Forget Garden and to cherish it in the Spring, throughout the Summer into the Fall and early Winter.

## **Goal:**

Our goal is to encourage the people of the United States, individually and through public and private institutions to express their remembrance, love, respect, gratitude, and our unshakeable commitment to never, ever, forget or forsake those who have served and sacrificed on behalf of America. We seek to foster a national movement to create and promote “The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Centennial Never Forget Gardens”. Such an undertaking will foster a unifying national identity that will transcend our political, social, religious or regional differences.

## **The Name:**

“Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Never Forget Garden” or by the short title: “Never Forget Garden”.

While the gardens we now invite America to plant and dedicate to the millions that serve and sacrifice today, those that have gone before and those that will come after, naturally tend to take on the character and the very name of “Remembrance Gardens”, we, nevertheless, chose the name “The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Centennial Never Forget Garden”.

- First, as originally intended and more perfectly consecrated by the millions that continue to make the pilgrimage to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (TUS) over these last 100 years, the TUS is about America’s sacred duty to never, ever, forget or forsake those who have served and sacrificed on behalf of America now, before, and in the future.
- Second, as we stood up the Society as a formal organization, we memorialized our mission and how we, as Honor Guard, related to that mission: they are hard linked and captured by the Society’s maxim, “Soldiers Never Die Until They Are Forgotten, Tomb Guards, Never Forget”. Our rigorous discipline to maintain the watch and our profound gratitude for the trust America has placed in our hands, have forged these two precepts into one inseparable statement by the American people –we will never forget you.
- Third, Congressman Dan Crenshaw provided electrifying leadership by precept and example as he constructed a profound teaching moment out of a popular TV program comic’s ill-conceived comedic ridicule about Congressman Crenshaw’s wound suffered in his service and sacrifice as a U.S. Navy Special Warfare Operator. When provided an opportunity to respond, this former U.S. Navy warrior gracefully accepted the apology that included a sincere “thank you for your service”. But he went further, and with purpose when he tendered a constructive path forward revealing his love for America’s sons and daughters that have answered our Country’s call. He said rather than saying “Thank you for your service”, we should consider saying “Never Forget,” explaining that it really says to the veteran, “I am in it with you”. The Society believes that “Never Forget” offers individuals and communities a path to express their full-throated support to our veterans and unwavering commitment to the principles that define us as Americans and that provokes the patriotic spirit residing deeply in the hearts of Americans.

## The Society's Vision:

The Society's vision of the Never Forget Garden is captured in the elegant prose of Dr. James D. Schaub<sup>1</sup>:

*"[T]he words 'the language of flowers' is an excellent context leading us to understand that the flowers express our deep respect and honor for our veterans that can speak for us when we struggle to express our feeling in words. [T]he use of flowers as symbols of high regard and remembrance is longstanding historically and culturally. We humans across time and the globe embrace flowers as our physical expression supplemental to verbal expression.*

*[A] Never Forget Garden can and should evoke emotions in individuals but should also foster an occasion for shared emotions and especially learning why this Garden is here. There are stories to be told of our veterans from the past and our service men and women, current and future. Because gardens are scalable, a large professional Never Forget Garden and a household Never Forget Garden can be effective stimulators. [T]he Never Forget Garden will create opportunities for teaching and remembrance. I can imagine a child asking mommy and daddy 'why is this garden special'? Or the parents taking the initiative and saying 'I want to tell you why this garden is special'. The Never Forget Garden will be, in a way, proxies for the Tomb."*

## The Essential Elements of the Proposal:

- Remembrance of veterans and their families.
- Opportunity for fostering a unifying national identity and for individual expression of patriotism.
- Recognize the "language of flowers" as a time-honored way to express the many facets of patriotism and connecting each of us to all those who have served and sacrificed on behalf of America and our unshakable commitment to the values that define us as Americans.
- Encourage participation in a National gardening initiative to include flowers, plants, and trees associated with remembrance, love, respect, mourning, veterans, veteran's organizations, wounded warriors, and specifically to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.
- Encourage the planting of flowers, plants, and trees that we list below, however, emphasize that the list is not exhaustive and to encourage local or regional selections to reflect individual expression.
- Encourage plantings that fully exploit the language of flowers, in terms of historical connections, color, scents, shape and conventional expressions of remembrance, love, respect, and gratitude.
- Vendor leadership to promote sales of plant materials and help identify flowers, plants, or trees that have been traditionally linked to remembrance, love, respect, and mourning.

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<sup>1</sup>James D, Schaub, PhD, President, Society of the War of 1812 in Maryland

- Encourage all branches of the Federal Government that provide landscaping and gardens within their jurisdiction to dedicate all or part of their gardens as “Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Centennial Never Forget Gardens.” E.g. All federal cemeteries, United States Arboretum, Botanical Garden, the United States Capitol, the United States Supreme Court, United States Military Academies, Veterans Administration Hospitals.
- Encourage private sector individuals and organizations to dedicate some or all of their gardens or plantings to be a Never Forget Garden, e.g. garden clubs, cemeteries, homeowner’s associations, historic homes and individual gardeners, patriotic organizations, civic organizations, the Boy Scouts of America, the Girl Scouts of America, and The Young Marines.<sup>2</sup> A specific example would be George Washington’s Mount Vernon and their support for the Military Order of the Purple Heart.
- Encourage private sector organization to support this initiative by showcasing it as part of their programs or offerings, through their multi-media programs.
- Encourage vendors of seeds, plants or garden architecture literature to support this initiative by specific offerings of seeds, plants, trees or literature associated with the Never Forget Garden and dedicate some part of their advertising or social media campaigns, e.g. seed or plant catalogs.

## **Implementation Strategy:**

- Identify lead sponsors such as George Washington’s Mount Vernon who have facilities both for gardens and meeting space for a national symposium.
- Public Service Announcement by the Society.
- Message to the public through our social media.
- National alert via our “Circular Letter”.
- Develop a multi-pronged media campaign that will ensure it going “viral”.
- Special mailing to those federal and state government officials that have shown interest and support for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. E.g. U.S. Senator Tom Cotton, U.S. Congressman Dan Crenshaw, the Governor of North Carolina, U.S. Capitol Gardner, Historians and Horticultors at Arlington National Cemetery, the Regimental Commander of the 3d United States Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard).
- Special mailing to the Gold and Blue Star Mothers and families.
- Direct and personal contact with patriotic organizations, e.g. American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, The Military Order of the Purple Heart, The Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, The Daughters of the America Revolution.
- Special mailing to seed, plant and tree vendors.
- Invitations our allies Embassies to also participate.

<sup>2</sup> Each of the 300 units in the program (46 states, Germany, and Japan) have their own name such as the Fort Meade Young Marines. The national headquarters is the Young Marines National Headquarters, based out of Dumfries, VA.

- Recruit programs that already have some connection with the use of flowers or identity with flowers and remembrance. E.g. the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Military Order of the Purple Heart.
- Promote the programs on Americanism championed by the various patriotic organizations.
- Develop a plaque that would accompany the Never Forget Garden with elements including an inverted laurel wreath, inscription, and ability to hold small American and MIA/POW flags.

## Flower, Plant and Tree Symbolism

Flowers, plants, and trees mean many things to many people. Below are a few of the blooms, plants and trees most closely associated with remembrance and commemoration. It is not intended to be prescriptive or exclusive. Indeed, we will add to this list as we learn from participants. So, don't let our list limit your creativity! If you're thinking of planting a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Never Forget Garden consult your family history, explore your community's history, search the internet; visit your local library, historic homes and gardens; talk to your neighborhood garden center or garden clubs and Master Gardener programs to learn more about other meaningful flowers, plants, and trees that will grow well in your hardiness zone.

## Suggested List of Flowers, Plants, Trees to Include in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Never Forget Garden

\*Note: This list is recommendations and not intended to be creatively restrictive in the gardens design.

- **White Roses: Purity** – White roses offer a powerful connection to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Chosen to designate the Unknown Soldier of WWI, Sergeant Edward F. Younger did so by placing a “spray of white roses” upon one of four caskets containing the remains of unidentifiable Americans killed in combat in 1921. The riveting power of this human drama is best experienced by reading the account set forth in “The Unknowns” by Patrick O’Donnell:

*“...Younger entered the room alone carrying a clutch of white roses. He later described the scene: ‘It was dim inside, the only light filtering in through small windows. For a moment I hesitated, and said a prayer, inaudible, inarticulate, yet real. Then I looked around. That scene will remain with me forever. Each casket was draped with a beautiful American flag. Never before had the flag seemed to have such sublime significance and beauty. About the walls were other flags, American and French; flower petals had been scattered over the floor, and outside I could hear the band playing a hymn.’”*

- **Purple Viola: Innocence** – This is the National Flower of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), known as the “Purple Heart Viola”, which has been described as having “the shape of a heart and is deep purple in color”. The flower was adopted 1946 by the Executive Committee of the MOPH after long consideration of the most appropriate bloom to symbolize the MOPH.

- **Carnations: Admiration and Love** – White, Red and Blue carnations were used in the selection ceremonies of the World War II and Korean War Unknown Soldiers:

In 1958, a wreath of white carnation, surrounded by red carnations, was used to select the Trans-Atlantic Candidate.

In 1958, a Hawaiian lei of white carnations was used to select the Trans-Pacific Candidate.

On May 25, 1958 a wreath of white carnations in the shape of a star, surrounded by red carnations, was used to make the final selection of the World War II Unknown Soldier.

On May 15, 1958 a wreath of white carnations, surrounded by blue carnations, was used to select the Korean War Unknown Soldier.

- **Pink Carnation: A Mother’s Love** – For those who have served as the Honor Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, there are few experiences that compare to listening to a mother tell of her loved one that was killed in combat and the remains never identified. It is a life changing experience.

- **Poppies: Remembrance** – The poem “In Flanders Fields” written by World War I Colonel John McCrae, a surgeon with Canada's First Brigade Artillery, captures McCrae's grief over the "row on row" of graves of soldiers who had died on Flanders' battlefields, located in a region of western Belgium and northern France. It presents a striking image of the bright red flowers blooming among the rows of white crosses and became a rallying cry to all who fought in the First World War. The poppy is well known in the allied countries—America, Britain, France, Canada, Australia and New Zealand—as the "Flower of Remembrance".

The poppy was adopted as the official memorial flower of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the poppy itself survives as a perpetual tribute to those who have given their lives for the nation's freedom. In 1920 the first use of artificial poppies was instituted with the help of the American Legion.

**“In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.**

**We are the dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.**

**Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.”<sup>3</sup>**

- **Forget-me-nots: Remembrance** – Tiny forget-me-not flowers have a special meaning throughout the world where they are grown and often worn as symbols of remembrance. Much like the poppy, the forget-me-not emerged first as a symbol of respect.
- **Tulips: Gratitude** – Each spring, Canada’s capital city comes alive with color as millions of tulips burst into bloom. These beautiful flowers serve as a symbol of the unique friendship that blossomed between the people of Canada and the Netherlands during World War II. In 1940, Crown Princess Juliana, the only child of Her Royal Highness Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, secretly boarded a Dutch vessel bound for Halifax. She, her husband and two small daughters soon took up residence in Ottawa, which provided the family a haven for the remainder of the war.

Her gratitude to the people of Canada was further reinforced by the bravery and sacrifices of the thousands of Canadians who fought to liberate the Netherlands in 1944 and 1945, and in 1945, to thank Canadians for their kindness, Princess Juliana presented Canada with 100,000 tulip bulbs. Canada continues to receive 20,000 bulbs from Holland each year as a sign of their enduring gratitude.

- **Daisy: Hope and Resistance** – During the World War II occupation of her country, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands sought refuge in the United Kingdom. The daisy held special significance for her as it had been blooming in Holland when the country was invaded. As a reminder of her nationality and of Holland under occupation, Queen Wilhelmina encouraged Dutch refugees to wear daisies (called *margriets* in Dutch) on their lapels.

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<sup>3</sup>For a compelling reading of this iconic poem listen to the reading of Senator John Warner at the Sacred Interfaith Service, held in partnership with the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission at the Washington National Cathedral, on November 11, 2018.

- **Laurel: Victory** – The tradition of using wreaths to show respect is an old one. Greeks and Romans often wove Bay Laurel tree leaves into wreaths to be worn as crowns by the victors of sporting events or military campaigns. Ever since, the foliage of Bay Laurel trees has been a symbol of both victory and death. That is why wreaths are laid at commemorative ceremonies around the world.

Laurel leaves are also sometimes used as decorative elements on stone monuments. Six laurel wreaths are carved into the side panels of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery representing and are inverted to represent mourning. Also, the coveted Tomb Guard Identification Badge worn by the Sentinels that stand the eternal vigil at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery depicts the East Front of the Sarcophagus encircled by an inverted wreath of laurel.



- **Rosemary: Remembrance** – In ancient times, rosemary was thought to strengthen memory. Greek scholars often wore rosemary in their hair to help remember their studies. In both literature and folklore, the herb has often been featured as an emblem of remembrance. Even today, Australians show their respect by wearing small sprigs of rosemary in their coat lapels on ANZAC Day.
- **Rose of Sharon: Resilience** – The rose of Sharon, or *Hibiscus*, is the national flower of Korea. Its beauty is said to reflect the glory and success of the Korean people while its hardiness speaks to their ability to persevere. The flower's name in Korean is *Mugunghwa* meaning "immortal flower". This flower holds special meaning for the many Canadians who served during the Korean War.
- **Bleuet de France: Remembrance** – Bleuet de France, or cornflower, is the traditional World War I remembrance flower that symbolizes delicacy and innocence. During the war it grew abundantly on the battlefields, much like the red poppy, and was also used to describe the fresh young French Soldiers, wearing clean bright blue uniforms in contrast to the muddy misery of the trenches they fought from. For the French the Bleuet de France is the symbol of memory for, and solidarity with veterans, victims of war, widows, and orphans, similar to the "remembrance poppy".
- **Peonies: Honor** – The Peony is known for representing ideas and values such as honor, beauty, romance, and wealth in many countries. In other countries this hardy flower is identified with masculinity and bravery.

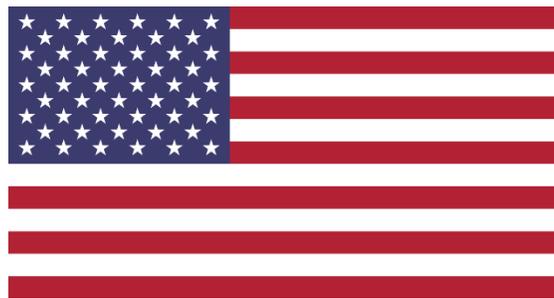
- **Campanula: Gratitude** – Also known as the Bellflower, the Campanula represents gratitude, humility and everlasting love and is often planted on graves.
- **Primrose: Eternal Love** – Found in almost every color this flower is typically the first to bloom in a year and represent joy, trust, and eternal love.
- **Borage: Courage** – Once mixed with wine by Celtic warriors prior to battle it is said to induce courage, and when brought into a home will bring tranquility and harmony.
- **Nasturtium: Victory** – Another resilient flower that when given as a gift may indicate there will be victory through battle or conquest.
- **Gladiolus: Honor and remembrance** – They are also called sword Lilies, or flower of the gladiators, because of their sword shape. The flower also symbolizes strength of character, faithfulness, integrity, and never giving up.
- **Statice: Remembrance** – Statice now comes in many different colors, each with its own meaning, but the primary color (purple or blue) represent sympathy and remembrance.
- **The White Birch and /or the River Birch: Hope** – A hardy tree that historically has been a symbol of new beginnings, hope, and the promise of what is to come. Not far from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, along Memorial Drive in Section 48, is a memorial tree known as the Mother's Tree which is dedicated to the Mother of the Unknown Soldier. A white birch tree was dedicated on Mother's Day, May 8, 1932 and its plaque is the oldest memorial tree marker remaining in the cemetery. A month earlier on April 9<sup>th</sup>, the Tomb sarcophagus as it is seen today was completed and unveiled to the public. That tree has since been replaced with a River Birch, the only species of birch resistant to the bronze birch borer insect pest.
- **The Ginkgo: Resiliency** – The Ginkgo Tree is naturally resistant to diseases, insects, pollution and even radiation (research the Hiroshima tree that survived after the atomic bomb devastated the city) and is seen as a symbol of unity, hope, and longevity. The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington, D.C. honors those who died as well as those who survived the nation's wars and bear the wounds of war. It is the only monument in Washington dedicated solely to those who have been disabled, and honors "not only the four million who are alive today, but the millions that have gone before us and those, unfortunately, who will come after us."
- **The Oak: Strength** – A tree recognized around the world, it grows slowly and symbolizes nobility, strength, resistance, wisdom, and knowledge. One of many trees having significant

meaning and connection to America's history of service and sacrifice. A Red Oak was planted on the grounds of Smithsonian Gardens near the American Museum of Natural History on Veteran's Day in November 2010, to honor those United States war veterans who were presented the Medal of Honor, which is the highest military award for valor a member of the United States Armed Forces can receive. Drawing upon the fact that American blood had been spilt during 11 wars around the world, the Red Oak was planted in soil collected from 16 battlegrounds.

- **The Balsam Fir: Remembrance** – An aromatic tree, the Balsam has biblical references and has been used for generations as wreaths for celebration and remembrance. The Worcester Wreath Company, which founded the Wreaths Across America, has used the Balsam Fir in their Veterans Remembrance Tree Program as another way to remember and honor our veterans. This program allows families of veterans to adopt a living tree in memory of their loved one, and the trees are kept in production and their balsam tips are harvested every three years and made in veteran's wreaths that are placed each December. This *"endless forest is a truly visual representation of our unwavering commitment to our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach and to recognize our veterans and families this year and for many years to come"*.

## How to Represent America's National Colors in the Never Forget Garden

Finally, while many of these flowers may answer the desire to install the patriotic colors of red, white and blue, we do not intend that these plantings carry that element of the Never Forget Garden. The patriotic colors of red, white and blue continue to be best represented by the American Flag, and we encourage you consider including this in your garden.



## How to Represent Our Keeping Faith with the Missing and POW in the Never Forget Garden

Our sacred duty extends to and includes keeping faith with the Missing In Action (MIA) and Prisoners of War (POW). Accordingly, we encourage also installing the MIA/POW black flag. The size of the flags should be determined by the gardener and the extent of the Never Forget Garden.



We also recommend consulting the American Legion program for American Flags, and etiquette.

## Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Never Forget Garden Memorial Marker

A memorial grave marker provides an excellent platform to display the American Flag and the flag of the Missing in Action and POW. Many Patriotic organizations offer grave marker/flag holder. See e.g. The American Legion, The Veterans of Foreign Wars, The Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, The Society of the Cincinnati, The Daughters of the American Revolution, etc.

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