



February is a month of transitions, as the cold weather and short days begin to give way to the nascent signs of spring, that season that is yet powerless to be born.



Amethyst is purple quartz and represents February. It is a beautiful blend of violet and red that can be found in every corner of the world. The name comes from the Ancient Greek, derived from the word methustos, which means “intoxicated.” Ancient wearers believed the gemstone could protect them from drunkenness. The amethyst is not only the February birthstone, it is also used to celebrate the sixth and 17th years of marriage.



February birthdays are represented by **Violets or Irises**, flowers that suggest truth, loyalty and faithfulness. The three upright petals of an iris bloom can indicate courage, faith and wisdom, or friendship, hope and compliments. The sweet-scented violet flower also embodies a sense of modesty, spiritual wisdom and humility. This faithful blooming plant is named after its traditional purple petals, which is in keeping with February's purple birthstone, the amethyst.

Some fun facts about the beautiful and interesting flower:

- There are between 400 and 500 species of violets, which span dozens of countries across the world. The most common species of violet found in the Canada – though there are around 60 species found in North America – is the blue violet, or *Viola sororia*. Sweet violets, also called *Viola odorata*, are known for their scent. And while they can also be found in the North America, they're native to Europe and Asia. Despite their name, African violets are actually not a species of violet – they're part of the Gesneriaceae family, which includes other flowering house plants.
- True violets have been cultivated for centuries, with the earliest known use of the flowers dating back to Ancient Greece in 500 B.C., if not earlier. The Greeks used violets in their wines, foods and medicines, and they actually loved the flower so much that it became the symbol of Athens.
- Though most violets prefer shady and cool areas with moist soil, the blooms are known for being hardy and able to adapt to most environments. That's because the flowers grow in many different climates and habitats worldwide, including woodlands, deserts and marshes. This is not to be confused with African violets, which prefer warm and humid surroundings.
- Notorious French military man and emperor Napoleon Bonaparte declared violets his own signature flower, and used the blooms to cover his wife Josephine's grave when she died in 1814. In fact, he was called Corporal Violet by friends, after promising them he would return from his exile on Elba before violet season. Bonaparte's supporters even used violets to determine if someone was loyal to him, by asking them if they liked the flowers – only a response of "Eh, bien" proved loyalty, according to the American Violet Society.
- Many people use violets in recipes for a variety of savory dishes, and the petals are commonly coated with sugar and used on cakes, chocolates and pastries as sweet garnishes. What many people don't know about the edible flowers is that they're actually fairly nutritious. The petals and stems of violets contain high amounts of vitamin C, an antioxidant that can improve the immune system and overall health. In fact, the flower has more vitamin C than most other vegetables.



- One thing violets are known most for is the fact that they have a lovely scent that seems to go away after just one sniff. That's because the flowers contain a chemical called ionine which desensitizes the nose and sense of smell temporarily. Still, the scent is widely used in perfumes, lotions and oils because it's so well-liked.

