



IDENTIFYING THE BLOSSOMS

Japanese cherry trees are unlike other cherry trees because they bloom for a very short time and do not bear fruit. The Japanese have cultivated more than 400 varieties. There are now more than 3,700 cherry trees around the Tidal Basin in West Potomac Park, East Potomac Park, the Washington Monument grounds and connecting parks.

WEeping HIGAN

Blossoms have either single layers of petals or double layers of petals and range from white to dark pink.

Timeline: Weeping Higan (green bar) starts first to bloom.

YOSHINO

Almond-scented with single, white blossom clusters. Because the flowers bloom before the leaves appear, the blossoms create a white cloud effect around the Tidal Basin.

Timeline: Yoshino (grey bar) blooms both a week after the Weeping Higan.

AKEBONO

Single pale-pink blossoms that fade to white.

Timeline: Akebono (orange bar) blooms both a week after the Weeping Higan.

KWANZAN

Produce deep pink double flowers up to 2.5 inches across that fade with age; grouped together in tight clusters with about 30 petals in each cluster.

Timeline: Kwanzan (brown bar) blooms seven to 10 days after the Yoshino.

Rite of Spring

GUIDE TO GO

GUIDE TO THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS

Go to www.washingtonpost.com/cherryblossoms for more information

Between 600,000 and 700,000 people are expected to make the annual pilgrimage to the Tidal Basin to welcome spring with the blooming of the cherry blossoms. The tradition began in 1912, when 3,020 cherry trees of 12 varieties were given to the United States by Japan as a symbol of peace between the nations. What to look for when you go:

MARCH/APRIL						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13

What is "peak bloom"?
The blooming period for the cherry blossoms will be March 28 through April 7. Peak bloom begins with the Yoshino cherry trees. When the Yoshinos around the Tidal Basin are 70 percent open, the blossoms are considered to be at their peak. This year, peak is forecast for March 31 through April 2.

Take this with you!
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Earliest peak:
March 15, 1990

Average peak:
April 4

Latest peak:
April 18, 1958

Last year's peak: April 6, 2001