



Dutch flowers to decorate St. Peter's Square during Easter mass: yellow predominates

Yellow will be the predominant colour of the floral decorations in place for the traditional Easter Mass on Sunday, 12 April in St. Peter's Square in the Vatican City. There will also be a large number of arrangements using white blossom, bulbs and flowers. This is the annual contribution of the Dutch floricultural sector to Easter high mass and will be put together by a select group of Dutch arrangers. Tens of thousands of worshippers will be in the square and millions across the world will witness the celebration of mass on their television screens, culminating in the 'Urbi et Orbi' blessing given by Pope Benedict XVI. The Dutch contribution to the celebrations in the form of the traditional flowers, receives worldwide appreciation.

This year the chosen colour for the arrangements, prepared under the guidance of Head Designer Charles van der Voort, is yellow with many touches of white. The decorations involve a wide range of trees, shrubs, spring flowering bulbs, blossom and flowers. Eye-catchers in this year's arrangements include yellow Tara roses, yellow pansies, the white blossom of the Amelanchier rotundifolia and white apple blossom. Tulips, Azaleas and Prunus will also be used. The Dutch arrangements and greenery will decorate the immediate area around the altar in the basilica where the mass will be held, the stairs of the basilica, the terraces next to the altar, the balcony where the Pope will give the 'Urbi et Orbi' blessing, the borders and St. Peter's Square itself.

Proud sector

The ocean of flowers in St. Peter's Square is preceded by a long period of careful preparation. Charles van der Voort is helped by specialists and organisations from the entire floricultural sector. They bring together all their areas of expertise to focus and perfect the Easter decorations. They are driven not only by skill but also by pride. The entire world joins those present in the square in admiration of the fabulous display of Dutch flowers and greenery. If this year Pope Benedict XVI continues the tradition and says "Bedankt voor de bloemen" (thank you for the flowers) in Dutch, the feeling of pride will extend to every Dutch person present and watching on TV. For just that moment the Easter celebration will take on a subtle hint of Holland.

White and yellow

In the Papal banner the colours white and yellow represent the silver and golden keys of Saint Peter which symbolise heavenly and earthly power. The Dutch arrangers have used the white and yellow of the papal banner in their decorations for Saint Peter's Square. In current colour symbolism yellow and white still have a strong link with Easter. Yellow also symbolises light, splendour and glory; white symbolises joy, tenderness and love. The colours are the same every year but their use has changed over time. This year there is a stronger emphasis on yellow flowers and the altar decorations have been interpreted differently, with products taken from the wide range of yellow and white Dutch bulbs, flowers and trees available. On the stairs and balcony, where there is room for a greater choice of colour, virtually the entire spectrum of Dutch floriculture will be represented.



24 years of change

Offering the floral decorations for Saint Peter's Square on behalf of the Netherlands has become a genuine tradition. The idea originated in 1985 in Utrecht. That was the year in which Pope John Paul II visited the Netherlands. Designer Nic van der Voort of Leiden took the initiative and decorated the platform at the Jaarbeurs with flowers in honour of the occasion. This was genuinely appreciated and the response was an invitation to provide an appropriate floral backdrop for the beatification of Dutch priest Titus Brandsma that same year in Rome. This was when the idea was born to provide a floral tribute every year at Easter. Since that time the Dutch contribution has only grown. Over the years ten terraces have been created next to and in front of the altar, which are decorated with Dutch products. The number of arrangers volunteering their services to help with the decorations has risen to twenty. This year will be the 24th time that Dutch flowers will adorn Saint Peter's Square. It is already the fourth time during the papacy of Pope Benedict XVI.

Note for the editorial staff:

In the enclosure you will find details of the products the Dutch floricultural sector has made available for the decoration of Saint Peter's Square.

For more information:

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Floral tribute from the Netherlands

In St. Peter's Square, Rome,
During the Urbi et Orbi blessing on 12 April 2009

The distribution shown below applies per garden.

Terraces 1 to 4

Acer
Azalea mollis
Rhododendron
Japanese azalea
Prunus
Conifer
Erica white
Almond white
Pieris white
+ a wide selection of tulips, narcissi and hyacinths

Terraces 5 and 6

Laburnum
Acer
Japanese azalea
Rhododendron
Prunus
Rhododendron short
Pieris
Almond
Broom
Conifer
Erica
Broom
+ a wide selection of tulips, narcissi and hyacinths

Terraces 7 and 8

Birch
Acer
Prunus
Azalea mollis
Japanese azalea
Conifer
Broom
Laburnum
+ a wide selection of tulips, narcissi and hyacinths



Terraces 9 and 10

Birch

Prunus

Laburnum

Acer

Rhododendron

Azalea mollis

Pieris

Conifer

Erica

+ a wide selection of tulips, narcissi and hyacinths

Stairs

Decorated with yellow pansies

Altar

4 x behind the altar, yellow flower arrangements

10 x in front of the altar, mixed yellow flower arrangements

Including: lilies, carnations, roses, Ornithogalum, asters, apple blossom, Amaryllis and tulips.

Balcony

On the balcony a strip including hyacinths, tulips, Gerberas, iris and broom.



holland

