

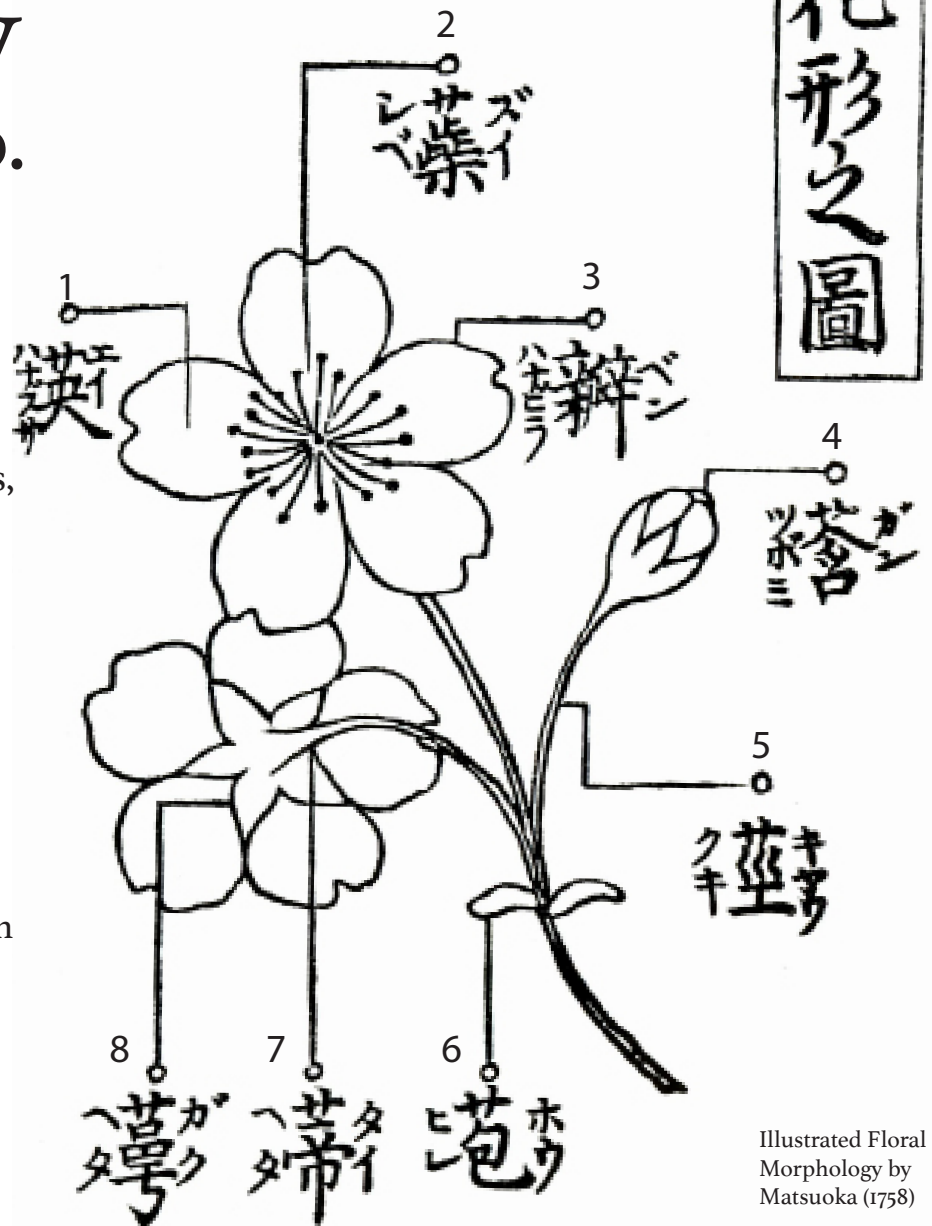
Cherry

Prunus spp.

Most of the cherry trees growing at the Arboretum are grown for their flowers, not fruit, and are native to several countries in Asia including Japan, China, Korea and Taiwan.

Parts of a cherry flower

- 1 petal
- 2 pistils and stamens
- 3 oval petal with indentation
- 4 bud
- 5 pedicel
- 6 bracts
- 7 calyx
- 8 sepal



Illustrated Floral Morphology by Matsuoka (1758)

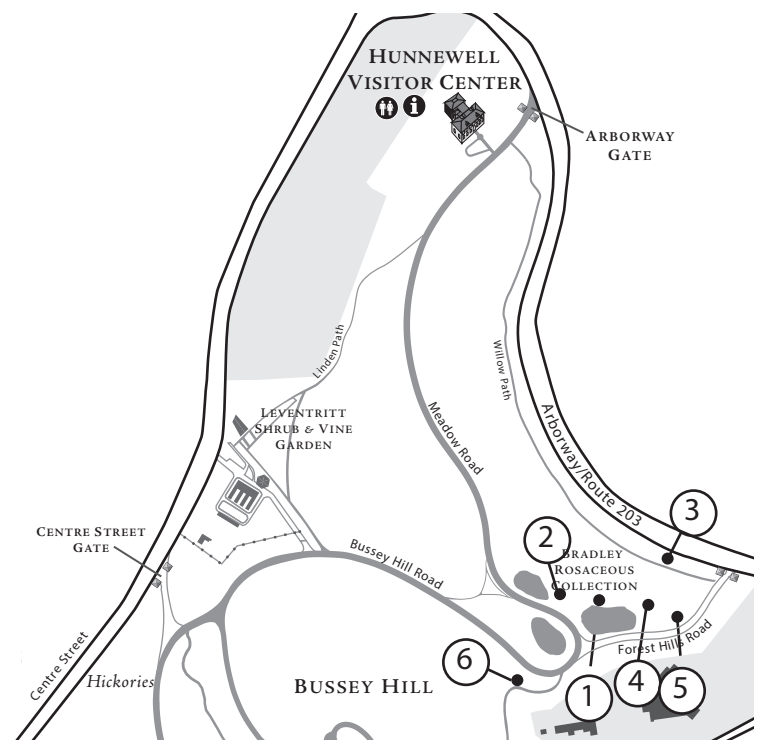
The flowering time of cherries, like most spring flowering plants, is dependent on a combination of day/night length and temperature. Different types have different blooming times. Most cherries have five petals but some have as many as fifty. Bud and flower color ranges from red to pink to white.

Flowering cherries have ornamental features beyond their blossoms. Summer and fall foliage as well as ornamental bark add year-round interest to the tree. On some, the lenticels (porous lines through which gases are exchanged) form distinctive patterns on the trunk and branches.

April Flowers

The different cherry trees bloom at various times throughout the month, so visit often. In addition to the plants below, there are beautiful trees on the west side of Peters Hill.

- ① Sargent cherry cultivar
Prunus sargentii 'Columnaris'
- ② Okame cherry
Prunus 'Okame'
- ③ European bird cherry
Prunus padus var *glauca*
- ④ Higan cherry
Prunus subhirtella 'Pendula'
- ⑤ Yoshino cherry (like those found in Washington DC)
Prunus x yedoensis
- ⑥ Judd's cherry
Prunus x juddii



A little history...

In the late 1800s, the Arnold Arboretum was responsible for some of these East Asian introductions of flowering cherries into North America. *Prunus sargentii* was first introduced to the Arboretum in 1890 by Dr. William S. Bigelow, who sent seeds from Japan. Two years later, in 1892, Charles S. Sargent (the first director of the Arnold Arboretum) also sent seeds back from his Japanese expedition. Before these first introductions, the diversity of flowering cherries available in the early 1900s in the US was limited. There were several native flowering cherry trees in this country before, such as the *Prunus serotina* (black cherry) and *Prunus emarginata* (bitter cherry); however they were not as showy and exquisitely beautiful as the East Asian varieties.

For centuries, the Japanese have valued cherry tree blossoms, called sakura. The beauty of the flowers and their brief life at the beginning of spring symbolize the essence of a human's short, but well-lived life. Cherry blossom festivals are a special feature of Japanese life. Festival activities include music, singing, painting, and writing poetry, such as Haiku.

Shining spring day ~ Falling cherry blossoms ~ With my calm mind
Haiku by Kino Tomonari

For fun ways to experience the Arboretum and the Painting Edo exhibition at the Harvard Art Museum through haiku, see our page that explores this creative collaboration:

<https://arboretum.harvard.edu/visit/explore-with-us/painting-edo-and-the-arboretum/>
Write your own haiku and share it with us.