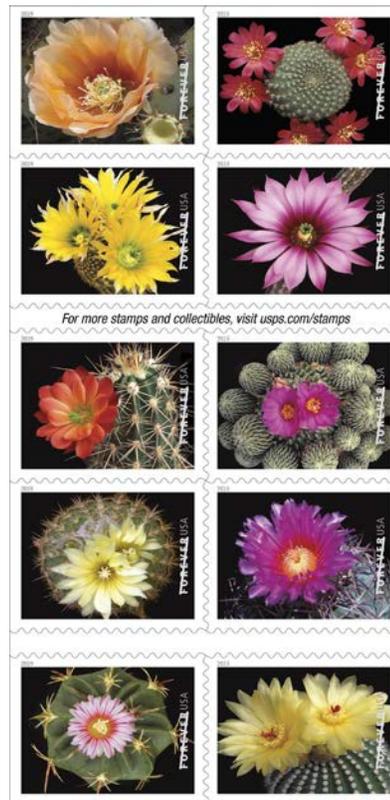


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## **CACTUS FLOWERS FOREVER**

*U.S. Postal Service Stamps Explore Unexpected Beauty*

MESA, AZ — The U.S. Postal Service showcases hidden beauty with the release of Cactus Flowers Forever stamps.

“The U.S. Postal Service has a long history of celebrating Earth’s floral diversity,” said Postal Service acting Manager of Operations and Support for the Western Area John DiPeri during the stamp’s first-day-of-issue dedication ceremony today. “Cacti in bloom have been described as Mother Nature’s fireworks. Their reds, pinks, yellows and violets bring to life a plant synonymous with an environment where few living things thrive.”

The ceremony was held in conjunction with the AmeriStamp Expo at the Mesa Convention Center, where DiPeri was joined by William J. Gicker, the Postal Service’s acting director of Stamp Services, and Ken Schultz, executive director of the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, AZ.

Each Cactus Flowers Forever stamp depicts the floral display of one of these ten cacti: *Opuntia engelmannii*, *Rebutia minuscula*, *Echinocereus dasyacanthus*, *Echinocereus poselgeri*, *Echinocereus coccineus*, *Pelecypora aselliformis*, *Parodia microsperma*, *Echinocactus horzonthalonius*, *Thelocactus heterochromus* and *Parodia scopa*. Cacti also may have common names, with some varieties having several different names in popular use.

The stamps are being issued in booklets of 20. These stamps will always be equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price. Within the booklet, each stamp design is featured twice. Art Director Ethel Kessler designed the stamps with existing photographs taken by John P. Schaefer.

Cactus flowers generally occur singly, although many separate blossoms might appear on a plant at the same time. Flowering occurs at different times of the year and even different times of the day or night. Most cactus flowers are large and flamboyant, with colors of white, red, pink, orange or yellow.

News of the stamp is being shared on social media using the hashtag **#CactusFlowers**. Followers of the Postal Service's Facebook page can view a recording of the ceremony at [facebook.com/USPS](https://facebook.com/USPS). Many of this year's other stamps may be viewed on [Facebook](#) or via [Twitter](#).

### **Postal Products**

Customers may purchase stamps and other philatelic products through the Postal Store at [usps.com/shop](https://usps.com/shop), by calling 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724), by mail through [USA Philatelic](#), or at Post Office locations nationwide.

Information on ordering first-day-of-issue postmarks and covers is found at [usps.com/shop](https://usps.com/shop) under "Collectors."

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

# # #

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