

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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U.S. Postal Service Commemorates 100 Years of Cherry Blossoms During National Festival

100 Million Forever Stamps Issued in Full-Bloom

To obtain a high-resolution image of the stamps for media use only, email mark.r.saunders@usps.gov.

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service celebrates the centennial of the gift of more than 3,000 cherry blossom trees from the city of Tokyo to Washington, DC, by dedicating the Cherry Blossom Centennial Forever stamps at the National Cherry Blossom Festival today. All 100 million stamps are now available at Post Offices nationwide and online at www.usps.com/shop or by calling 1-800-STAMP24.

“These two new stamps pay tribute not only to the beauty and splendor of springtime, but to all that the cherry blossoms represent — a symbol of life’s transience, a celebration of being alive — and a welcome harbinger of spring,” said Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe in dedicating the stamps. “In this small way, the Postal Service has created a lasting tribute to the gift of cherry blossoms in Washington, DC, as well as the friendship between two nations that inspired that gift.”

Joining Donahoe in dedicating the stamps Ambassador of Japan Ichiro Fujisaki; National Cherry Blossom Festival Executive Director Diana Mahew; stamp artist Paul Rogers; and, National Building Museum Executive Director Chase Rynd. U.S. Postal Service Consumer and Industry Affairs Vice President Susan LaChance served as emcee.

“These Cherry Blossom trees were planted 100 years ago as a gift for generations to come,” said Ambassador Fujisaki. “And like the trees, these stamps and the stamps that Japan will issue next week will serve as a cherished gift for future generations.”

The se-tenant stamps — one scene across two stamps — picture cherry trees in full-bloom around the Tidal Basin. In the stamp on the left, trees arch over two girls dressed in bright kimonos and a family on a stroll with the Washington Monument in the background. On the second stamp, the Jefferson Memorial forms the backdrop for tourists taking in the sights under a canopy of pink blooms. Working with art director Phil Jordan of Falls Church, VA, artist Paul Rogers of Pasadena, CA, created the near-mirror stamp art images. Visit this [link](#) to get the back story on the stamps and preliminary

sketches of the artwork.

A brief history of how the cherry trees came to Washington appears on the back of the stamp pane along with a modern translation by Emiko Miyashita and Michael Dylan Welch of a traditional, circa ninth-century poem written by Ki no Tomonori (c.850–c.904).

Other 2012 Stamps

Customers may view the Cherry Blossom Centennial Forever stamps as well as many of this year's other stamps on Facebook at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSStamps), through [Twitter@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or on the website *Beyond the Perf* at beyondtheperf.com/2012-preview. *Beyond the Perf* is the Postal Service's online site for background on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at a local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at usps.com/shop or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Cherry Blossom Centennial Stamp
Special Cancellations
P.O. Box 92282
Washington, DC 20090-2282

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes by mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by May 24, 2012.

How to Order First-Day Covers

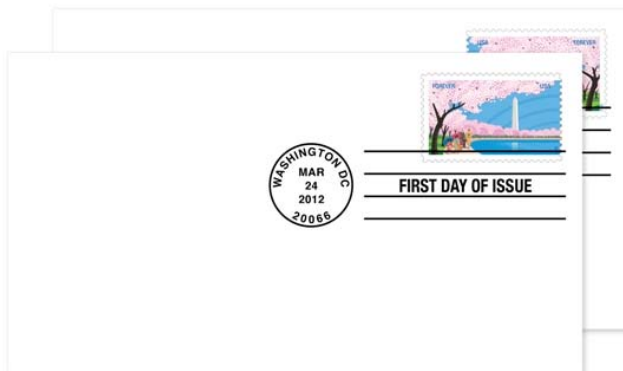
The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly USA Philatelic catalog, online at www.usps.com/shop or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service
Catalog Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

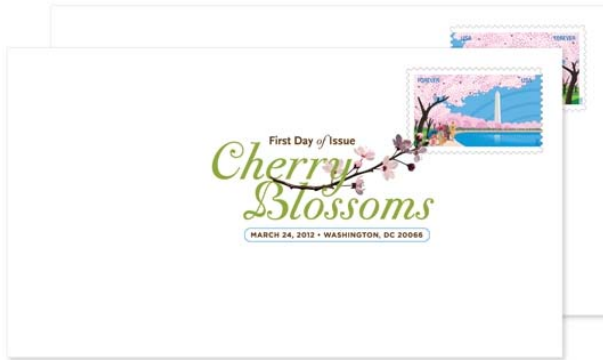
Philatelic Products

In addition to the stamps, [six philatelic products](#) are available. International customers may purchase the stamps and related products by calling 001-816-545-1000 or faxing 001-816-545-1201.

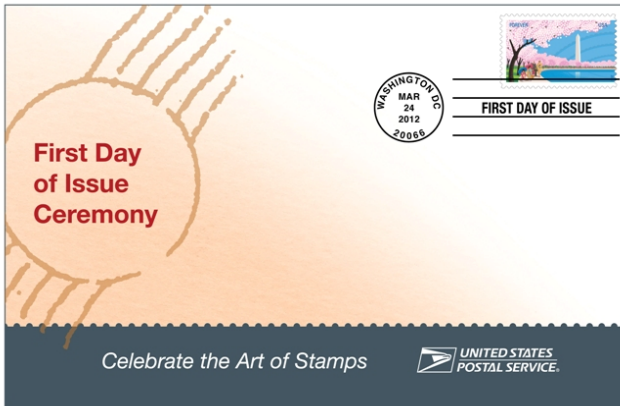
- 468263, First-Day Cover Set of 2, \$1.78.



- 468268, Digital Color Postmark (DCP) Set of 2, \$3.20.



- 468291, Ceremony Program (random single), \$6.95.



- 468294, Notecards, \$13.95.



- 468299, Cancellation Keepsake (DCP Set of 2 w/Pane), \$12.95.



- 468297, Commemorative Panel, \$9.95

AMERICAN COMMEMORATIVE PANELS

Cherry Blossom Centennial

IN EARLY 1912, more than 3,000 Japanese cherry blossom trees arrived in Washington, D.C., a gift from the city of Tokyo to the city of Washington intended to honor the friendship between the United States and Japan. These new stamps, designed by art director Phil Jordan and featuring artwork by Paul Rogers, commemorate the centennial of this gift by showing cherry trees in full bloom around the Tidal Basin.

One of the great legacies of First Lady Helen Herron "Nellie" Taft was the beautification of what is today known as Potomac Park in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Taft visualized the area embellished with Japanese cherry trees that would bloom profusely with white and pink flowers every spring—a dream she made come true. In a modest ceremony at the Tidal Basin on March 27, 1912, Mrs. Taft and Viscountess Chinda, wife of the Japanese ambassador, planted the first twisters.

For a century, Washington's cherry blossoms have been a perennial source of pleasure and pride. In 1927, local citizens held a pageant, including a reenactment of the original planting ceremony, to celebrate the gift of these stunning trees. During the 1930s, similar celebrations became annual events. Revived after a hiatus during World War II, the National Cherry Blossom Festival today encompasses myriad events such as a parade, concerts, games, and a variety of cultural programs, drawing more than a million visitors to the nation's capital each year.

Countless tourists and locals have visited, photographed, and stood awestruck beneath the canopy of pink and white blossoms that appear around the Tidal Basin each spring. Because these spectacular trees flower so briefly, the Japanese often see them as poignant symbols of transience, making every blossom an invitation to celebrate being alive.

Stamp printed by Ashton Potter (USA) Ltd. (APL) / BLS 888 in series / March 24, 2012 / Printed in U.S.A. / © 2012 United States Postal Service

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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A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With nearly 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, usps.com, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. In 2011, the U.S. Postal Service was ranked number one in overall service performance, out of the top 20 wealthiest nations in the world, Oxford Strategic Consulting. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute. Follow the Postal Service on Twitter @USPS_PR and on Facebook at facebook.com/usps