

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 10, 2015

Contact: Sarah Ninivaggi  
202.268.1997  
[sarah.a.ninivaggi@usps.gov](mailto:sarah.a.ninivaggi@usps.gov)  
[usps.com/news](http://usps.com/news)



## **Gifts of Friendship Forever Stamps Celebrate Centennial Gift of Dogwoods to Japan**

*Flowering Dogwood and Cherry Trees Adorn Stamps Issued in U.S. and Japan*

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service and Japan Post jointly issued Gifts of Friendship Forever stamps today, celebrating the American issuance during the Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, DC.

The stamps feature beautiful images of flowering dogwood and cherry trees and honor the enduring connection between two nations on the centennial of the gift of dogwood trees from the United States to Japan in 1915.

“These trees bring renewed life each spring after the long winter months and are celebrated on both sides of the Pacific Ocean with annual festivals that echo the spirit of friendship,” said Postal Service Chief Sales and Marketing Officer Nagisa Manabe. “I’m honored to be a part of this special moment that honors our collective history and heritage.”

Joining Manabe in dedicating the stamps were National Cherry Blossom Festival President Diana Mayhew and National Conference of State Societies United States Cherry Blossom Queen Rainey Sewell, among others.

A Special Dedication Stamp Ceremony will also be held on Saturday, April 11, at 2 p.m. during the 55th Annual Sakura Matsuri Japanese Street Festival, located at 13th Street on Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.

During this event, Manabe will be joined by Ambassador John R. Malot, president of the Japan-America Society of Washington, DC; Matthew P. Goodman, senior adviser for Asian Economics and Chairman of Japan-America Society; Kenichiro Sasae, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Japan; and

the Flowering Dogwood queen, Erika Minami.

### Stamp Design

Stamp artist Paul Rogers worked with art director and designer William J. Gicker to create the U.S. stamps. Japanese artist Junko Kaifuchi illustrated the stamps from Japan Post. The left side of the stamp sheet features four new stamp designs: two created by the Postal Service and two created by Japan Post. On the right side of the sheet are eight additional stamps, four each of the two U.S. designs.

The first stamp depicts the Lincoln Memorial with vibrant cherry trees in the foreground, while the second stamp depicts the U.S. Capitol building surrounded by white and pink dogwood trees. The Japanese-designed stamps feature two prominent buildings in Tokyo: the National Diet Building framed by cherry blossoms, and the clock tower outside the Diet Building rising behind a foreground of white dogwood flowers.

### Background

In a ceremony at the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C., on March 27, 1912, First Lady Helen Herron Taft and Viscountess Chinda, wife of the Japanese ambassador, planted the first two of 3,020 flowering cherry trees gifted to the nation's capital from the city of Tokyo. As a show of gratitude for this generous gift, former President William Howard Taft arranged for the United States to send 50 flowering dogwood trees to Japan in 1915. This reciprocal gift featured a species of tree native to the eastern United States and Canada.

These gestures of goodwill fostered a rich tradition of exchanging cherry and dogwood trees that continues to this day. In 1952, the National Park Service sent bud wood from cherry trees along the Tidal Basin to Tokyo to help revitalize the cherry tree grove around the Arakawa River — the same grove where the trees sent to Washington in 1912 originated. Lady Bird Johnson received 3,800 cherry trees from Japan in 1965. They were planted around the Washington Monument and elsewhere in the District of Columbia as part of the First Lady's efforts to beautify the capital. In 1982, Japanese horticulturalists collected approximately 800 cuttings from the Tidal Basin's cherry trees to replace those lost when a Japanese river changed its route.

In October 2012, to celebrate the centennial of Japan's original gift of flowering cherry trees in 1912, the U.S. Department of State, with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, sent the first 100 of 3,000 flowering dogwood trees to Tokyo. Planted on November 16, 2012, in Yoyogi Park as part of the Friendship Blossoms — Dogwood Trees Initiative, the dogwood trees mark a continued investment in the long friendship between the U.S. and Japan. The Tohoku region will receive approximately 1,000 trees to commemorate the victims of the May 2011 earthquake and tsunami.



In 2012, the U.S. Postal Service celebrated the centennial of the gift of cherry blossom trees from Tokyo to Washington, DC, by dedicating the [Cherry Blossom Centennial Forever stamps](#) at the National Cherry Blossom Festival. These stamps are still available at this link (provide hyperlink.)

### Ordering 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 [usps.com/shop](https://usps.com/shop) or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

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

### 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 their local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at [usps.com/shop](https://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 a larger envelope addressed to:

Gifts of Friendship Stamps  
Special Events  
PO Box 92282  
Washington, DC 20090-2282

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark up to a quantity of 50. For more than 50, customers have to pay five cents each. All orders must be postmarked by June 10, 2015.

### Philatelic Products

There are 12 philatelic products for this stamp issue:



589808, Press Sheet [with Die cut](#), \$35.28, (print quantity 1,500).

589806, Press Sheet without Die cut, \$35.28, (print quantity 1,000).



589810, [Keepsake with Digital Color Postmark](#), \$12.95.



589816, [First-Day Cover \(Set of 4\)](#), \$3.72.

589818, Full Pane First-Day Cover, \$8.38.

589819, Cancelled Full Pane, \$8.38.



589821, [Digital Color Postmark \(Set of 4\)](#), \$6.56.



589823, [Notecards](#), \$16.95.



589824, [Framed Art](#), \$39.95.



589830, [Ceremony Program \(random\)](#), \$6.95.

589831, Stamp Deck Card, \$0.95.

589832, Stamp Deck Card with Digital Color Postmark (random), \$1.99.

Many of this year's other stamps may be viewed on Facebook at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://facebook.com/USPSStamps), via Twitter [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps).

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

# # #

**Please Note:** For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the [USPS Newsroom](https://usps.com/newsroom).

Reporters interested in speaking with regional Postal Service public relations professionals should visit this [link](#).

Follow us on [twitter.com/USPS](https://twitter.com/USPS) and like us at [facebook.com/USPS](https://facebook.com/USPS). For more information about the Postal Service, visit [usps.com](https://usps.com) and [usps.com/postalfacts](https://usps.com/postalfacts).