

## May Day and Maryland

What is May Day? May Day is a holiday celebrated on May 1. It is the halfway point between spring and summer. May Day doesn't have one specific origin, but instead is a mix of several different springtime traditions.

One inspiration for May Day is the ancient Roman festival of Floralia. This celebration honored Flora, the goddess of flowers. The festival took place between April and May and lasted for a week.

Maypoles are another old tradition that inspired the modern celebration of May Day. In medieval Europe, villagers tied colorful ribbons on a tall pole. The girls in the village would each grab the end of a ribbon and dance around the pole, weaving the colors together.

In America, the pilgrims exchanged the Maypole tradition for the practice of filling baskets with flowers and treats. This tradition lasted for a long time. It still exists today in certain areas of the country.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, people hung May Day baskets on the doors of friends and neighbors. In some communities, hanging a basket was a way to express your love. The idea was that you would hang the basket secretly. If the basket hanger was seen, the recipient would chase them and try to tag them.

This May Day tradition is not as popular as it once was. But one place that still celebrates May Day with flower baskets is Annapolis, Maryland. This town is known for its elaborate May Day events.

The modern May Day traditions in Annapolis started in 1956. A garden club sponsored a competition for flower baskets hung on the town's doors. It gave out prizes for the best baskets on businesses and homes. The competition is still going strong today. Take a trip to Annapolis and celebrate spring!

Where did people celebrate Floralia?

- A. Annapolis, Maryland
- B. Medieval Europe
- C. Early America
- D. Ancient Rome

Who danced around the maypole?

- A. Pilgrims
- B. Girls in Europe
- C. Ancient Romans
- D. People from Maryland

Which tradition is NOT mentioned as an inspiration for modern May Day?

- A. Floralia
- B. Flower baskets
- C. Maypoles
- D. Fruit salad

What does the author mean by the phrase "still going strong"?

- A. You have to be strong to hang the baskets
- B. The competition remains popular
- C. The strongest person wins the competition
- D. The baskets have to be still and not wobble

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