

More than just a flower

Quotations

“The complications with the lily of the valley go even farther. For example, the flower cannot be picked in rain. Once picked, one drop of water on top of the plant can mean that it is destroyed. So, if it happens to be raining when the flowers need to be picked, extreme measures have to be taken to protect the flower. Tents are build, tarps are pulled, anything and everything to try and make sure the flower does not get wet. “ (Dr. J)

“So, I asked about greenhouses and whether it would be easier to grow lily of the valley inside, under controlled conditions. The answer is yes, and no. Yes, it is possible. But no, it is not the French way!” (Dr. J)

“And I have to take a second to comment on this, because this is so wonderfully French to me. Think about the French savoir vivre. Think about why that French cheese or that French wine or baguette tastes so incredible. Or think about that one piece of clothing from a certain French designer ... What I mean is that in France I have the feeling that certain traditions, ways of life, rituals, be it more special such as the offering of a bouquet of lily of the valley on May 1st or something that is done on a more regular, even daily basis, there is great attention spent on detail, there is an effort made... value is placed on the time spent, on the gesture, on the delicacy, the beauty...” (Dr. J)

“One of the things that has also been associated with the lily of the valley, is that, on May 1st, it can be sold by anyone ... anywhere ... without a license ... and without having to pay any taxes on the profit made. And apparently, many organizations, associations and political parties, including the communist party have always used the sale of lily of the valley on May 1st to up their yearly budget.

But individuals, young people, even kids often buy some lily of the valley and make their own little bouquets, to sell them in the streets for a bit of pocket money.” (Dr. J)

“Language gets complicated sometimes, because, as you could see, rusé has a positive connotation in French, but the word ruse, which comes from rusé indicates the negative connotation in English.” (Dr. J)

Vocabulary

Source: Merriam Webster online dictionary www.merriam-webster.com

General Vocabulary

blossom (verb): to produce or yield flowers

bouquet (noun): flowers picked and fastened together in a bunch

charlatan (noun): one making usually showy pretenses to knowledge or ability

connotation (noun): something suggested by a word or thing

cultivate (verb): to prepare or prepare and use for the raising of crops

deceitful (adjective): having a tendency or disposition to deceive or give false impressions

delicate (adjective): easily torn or damaged

dormancy (noun): the quality or state of being dormant

entrepreneurial (adjective): having to do with the creation and development of economic ventures : of, relating to, characteristic of, or suited to an [entrepreneur](#)

fundraiser (noun): a social event (such as a cocktail party) held for the purpose of raising funds

fragile (adjective): easily broken or destroyed

grueling (adjective): trying or taxing to the point of exhaustion

horticulturalist (noun): a person whose work involves growing fruits, vegetables, flowers, or ornamental plants

mayflower (noun): any of various spring-blooming plants

partial (adjective): of or relating to a part rather than the whole / not general or total

proximity (noun): the quality or state of being proximate

resourceful (adjective): able to meet situations /capable of devising ways and means

rusé (noun): a wily subterfuge

scheming (adjective): given to forming schemes

seamstresses (noun): a woman whose occupation is sewing

subjugated (verb): to bring under control and governance as a subject

throw (someone) a curve/curveball (idiom): to present (someone) with a difficult and unexpected problem, situation, question, etc.

wilt (verb): to lose turgor from lack of water

Discussion Questions

1) Why would such a fragile flower represent French Labor Day?

2) Do you know of a flower in your own culture that is strongly associated with a particular holiday or tradition?

3) As discussed in the episode, what are the intricate differences between the terms se débrouiller (verb), la magouille (noun) and rusé(e) (adjective)?

4) How are traditions represented in the episode? What are the positive and negative aspects of following traditions?

5) What did you learn about Nantes?