

Bringing the Museum Home: Cheery Cherry Blossom

Spring is here at last! All around the trees and plants are beginning to grow. In Japan, one tree in particular is now in flower - the cherry blossom tree, or **sakura** in Japanese.

In Japan, cherry blossom is thought to be very special. Every spring people enjoy **hanami**, or picnicking under the blooming cherry blossom trees. People eat their lunch with friends and family in a tradition thought to date back around 1300 years to when the Japanese Emperor and his courtiers had refreshments under the trees around the Imperial Palace.

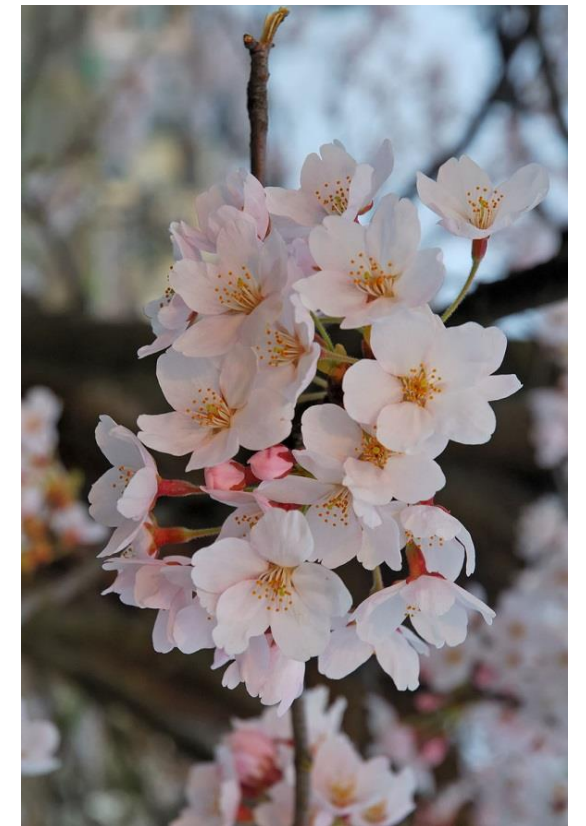
Over time, the custom spread through Japanese society, as everyone wanted to copy the Emperor's ways.

In Japanese culture cherry blossom symbolises the short, fleeting nature of life itself. Just as the blossom lasts a few days before it is blown away by wind and rain, so too life passes by in an instant.

You can create your own cherry blossom collage. Here's how;



1. Print the tree template, or try drawing your own.
2. Next, using white or pink paper create some flowers. You could scrunch up small pieces of paper and stick them on, or cut out petal shapes and glue them onto the branches. Or you could draw flowers with coloured pens



Top: Cherry blossom flower in full bloom.

Bottom: Cherry trees at the Imperial Palace, Japan.