

# THE MONTHLY GAZETTE

*"How beautifully leaves grow old. How full of light and color are their last days."*

~ John Burroughs



## Animal of the Month – Tarantula

Tarantulas are the world's largest spiders. There are around 850 different species of this invertebrate that lives in arid, semidesert, grassland, jungle, and tropical rain forest climates throughout the world. These creatures have tiny bristles covering their bodies that sense vibrations to help them detect prey. Tarantulas use these "hairs" as a weapon against predators by ejecting them from their abdomen toward their attacker's face and eyes. The bite of the tarantula, while deadly for its prey, is not usually fatal for humans, and in some cases, might be similar in feeling to a



bee sting. Tarantulas are nocturnal hunters that feed on insects like beetles and grasshoppers, smaller spiders, and small lizards. They do not make webs, but the females do release a silken trail behind them that the males use to find them for mating. The resulting eggs (typically between 500 to 1,000 or more) are carried in a silken pouch on the mother's body until they hatch.

## Special Days

**World Teachers' Day**  
October 5

**Columbus Day (U.S.),  
Indigenous Peoples'  
Day & Thanksgiving  
(Canada)**  
October 11

**National M&M Day**  
October 13

**Sweetest Day**  
October 16

**World Pasta Day**  
October 25

**Halloween**  
October 31

## Flower – Calendula



The calendula, which is commonly referred to as the pot marigold, is a hardy flowering plant that can thrive in all kinds of climates.

Although native to the Mediterranean region, they are found all over the world. This little golden-yellow flower has many medicinal uses, including as a natural anti-inflammatory. Its petals can also be eaten and have been used to color cheeses. While the origin of the calendula's name remains unknown, some researchers speculate that its common name, *marigold*, refers to the Virgin Mary.

## Birthstone – Opal



October's birthstone is the much-celebrated opal. Over 90% of the world's opals come from Australia, including the highly prized black opals.

Opals come in a kaleidoscope of other colors, including blue, white, green, yellow, red, pink, purple, and orange. This rare, glittery stone is formed from silica and water. As they have a high water content, opals need to be rubbed with oil regularly to prevent drying out or cracking. Ancient Greeks thought the opal honored its wearer with the gift of foresight and prophecy.



## Be-Leaf It or Not, October's in the Air

While some Octobers mark the first frost of the winter to follow, within days this month often rebounds with warm, near-summer-like weather. It's during these final warm days of the year that farmers rush to harvest the last of their crops. The ancient Romans celebrated this harvest season with festivals throughout the month.

October, with its beautifully changing foliage, is also one of the most colorful months of the year. Deciduous trees provide vibrant hues, with leaves that change color before falling to the ground in a carpet

of yellows, browns, purples, oranges, and fading reds. The long, sunny days of summer (and the active chlorophyll in the leaves turning sunlight into food) keep the leaves green. When the days shorten and cool in fall, the green recedes, causing the underlying colors to emerge.

These colorful deciduous trees include the following species:

- Ash (yellow or purplish yellow)
- Oak (red, brown, or russet)
- Red maple (red)
- Sassafras (deep orange or bright yellow)

## October's Calming Gems

In addition to the opal, October's other birthstone is the tourmaline, a beautiful gemstone that is thought to bring calm, peace, and emotional fortitude to its wearer. Tourmalines come in an array of gorgeous colors including bright pink, green, brown, and blue.

### October Zodiacs

Libra (the Scales)  
October 1–22

Scorpio (the Scorpion)  
October 23–31

**October** was the eighth month of the early Roman calendar, before January and February were added to fill out the winter period. It takes its name from the Latin word for eight: *octo*. October's temperatures make it an ideal time for crafting beer, wine, and cider—so much so that in Old English it became known as *Winmonth*, which translates to “wine month.” This month is considered the height of autumn and also marks the beginning of winter celebrations, dubbed *Winterfylleth* by the Anglo-Saxons.

## Famous Dates in October

**Oct. 1, 1908** – Henry Ford introduces the new Model T car. Cost: \$825.

**Oct. 2, 1975** – Joe Frazier faces off against Muhammad Ali in the famous “Thrilla in Manila” boxing match.

**Oct. 4, 1883** – The Orient Express debuts.

**Oct. 6, 1927** – The first feature-length “talkie” movie, *The Jazz Singer*, premieres.

**Oct. 29, 1929** – The U.S. stock market crashes.

### What's Lucky in October?

Lucky Color: Green  
Lucky Animal: Shark  
Lucky Letter: W  
Lucky Day: Tuesday  
Lucky Plant: Pumpkin



## October Birthdays

Julie Andrews (actress) – October 1, 1935  
Mahatma Gandhi (spiritual leader) – October 2, 1869  
Buster Keaton (comedian) – October 4, 1895  
Neil deGrasse Tyson (scientist) – October 5, 1958  
Luciano Pavarotti (singer) – October 12, 1935  
Rita Hayworth (actress) – October 17, 1918  
Mae Jemison (astronaut) – October 17, 1956  
Robert Reed (actor) – October 19, 1932  
Celia Cruz (singer) – October 21, 1925  
Pablo Picasso (artist) – October 25, 1881  
Mahalia Jackson (singer) – October 26, 1911  
Sylvia Plath (writer) – October 27, 1932  
Bill Gates (billionaire) – October 28, 1955  
Jane Pauley (journalist) – October 31, 1950