



↓
Then-First-Lady Helen Herron Taft planted one of the first trees.

The Cherry Orchard

D.C.'s rite of spring marks its centennial.

Every year, millions of tourists come to Washington, D.C., to marvel at the flowering cherry trees planted along the Tidal Basin during the National

Cherry Blossom Festival. This year, the festival will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the gift of those 3,000 cherry trees from Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo to the city of Washington, D.C. In commemoration, the National Cherry Blossom Festival will host a grand five-week spectacular worthy of the tableaux's spring-time splendor.

The 2012 Centennial celebration will host hundreds of events, many of which are free and open to the public. Highlights will include the lavish opening ceremony on March 25, which will feature local and national entertainment. As of press time, the featured performers had yet to be announced, but past performers have included former *Tonight Show* bandleader, Kevin Eubanks, and Japanese jazz pianist, Keiko Matsui.

But, of course, the main attraction of the festival is the beautiful pinky blooms themselves. The opening of the buds on the trees can not be predicted until at least 10 days before the peak bloom (which typically occurs during the last week of March and first week of April). Be sure to check the National Cherry Blossom Festival website for a more accurate forecast closer to the festival.

March 20-April 27. Washington, D.C. 877-44-BLOOM.
nationalcherryblossomfestival.org.