

DOMINICA'S NATIONAL SYMBOLS

Flag



The flag of the Commonwealth of Dominica consists of a circular emblem of red bearing a Sisserou Parrot standing on a twig encircled by ten lime green stars. This is superimposed on three vertical and three horizontal stripes of yellow, black and white forming a triple coloured cross against a background of forest green.

The central emblem presents the National Bird of Dominica, the Sisserou parrot, also a symbol of flight toward greater heights and fulfillment of aspiration. The Parrot also comes from the Dominica Coat of Arms, thus symbolising the official seal of the country.

The ten lime green stars - the traditional symbol of hope - represent the ten parishes of the country, each with equal status, thus the equality of our people. The red central emblem symbolises Dominica's commitment to social justice.

The yellow, black and white stripes form a triple coloured cross representing the Trinity of God. The cross itself demonstrates belief in God since the Commonwealth of Dominica is founded upon the principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God.

The yellow stripe represents the sunshine of our land, our main agricultural produce: citrus and bananas; and is also a symbol of the Carib and Arawak people, the first inhabitants of the Island.

The white stripe represents the clarity of our rivers and waterfalls and the purity of aspiration of our people.

The black stripe represents the rich black soil of our island on which our agriculture is based, as well as our African heritage.

The general background of the dark green symbolises our rich verdant forest and the general lushness of the island.

Coat of Arms

The following is an heraldic description of Dominica's Coat of Arms.



Quarterly Or and Azure a cross filled counterchanged in the first quarter on a Rocky Mount Sable a Coconut Tree fructed proper in the second a Dominica Crapaud also proper in the third on Water Barry wavy a base a Carib canoe with sail set all likewise proper in the fourth quarter on a Rocky Mount also sable a Banana Tree fructed also proper and for the crest. On a Wreath Argent and Azure a Rocky Mount Sable thereon a Lion Passant guardant Or and for the Supporters. On either side of Sisserou Parrot (*Amazona imperialis*) proper beaked and membered or together with the motto Apres Bondie C'est La Ter.

The National Bird, The Sisserou parrot



The Sisserou parrot (*Amazona imperialis*), "The Pride of Dominica", is generally recognized as the National Bird of Dominica. The parrot figures prominently on the Coat

of Arms, the National Flag, the Public Seal, The Mace of the House of Assembly and Dominica's Honours for Meritorious Service to the Country.

The Sisserou Parrot is protected and it is probably among the oldest species of Amazon parrot in the world, and is found only in Dominica. Unfortunately this bird is most vulnerable, particularly when young, but through evolution, it has adapted to various changes in its habitat. Even more unfortunately, it has not been able to adapt to the bad influences of man.

National Flower, *Sabinea Carinalis*



The flower honoured as our National Flower is a wild xerophitic plant known botanically as *Sabinea carinalis*, commonly known as Carib Wood or 'Bois Caraibe'. It was legislated the plant presents a magnificent spectacle.

Its hardiness and scarlet flowers are reminiscent of our strong rugged and resourceful people with an ability to survive and overcome problems, and Dominica's ability to triumph despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles as the National Flower, along with the Coat of Arms and National Flag in 1978. (The National Emblems of Dominica Act, 1978) (Act No.18 of 1978).

As an indigenous plant, one of the reasons for which it was selected, it has survived our entire history, and hopefully, will be with us for all time. It can therefore be said to represent the continuity of our young people.

When in bloom, it displays precocious bright scarlet flowers along the entire length of its branches, and is found growing along dry coastal areas. Distribution in the wild is low, but it is an extremely hardy plant. When grown at high elevations, even in good soil, 'Bois Caraibe' will be bushy but will not flower profusely. Around April, when in full bloom.

The National Anthem

Isle of beauty, isle of splendour,
Isle to all so sweet and fair,
All must surely gaze in wonder
At thy gifts so rich and rare.
Rivers, valleys, hills and mountains,
All these gifts we do extol.
Healthy land, so like all fountains,
Giving cheer that warms the soul.

Dominica, God hath blest thee
With a clime benign and bright,
Pastures green and flowers of beauty
Filling all with pure delight,
And a people strong and healthy,
Full of godly, rev'rent fear.
May we ever seek to praise Thee
For these gifts so rich and rare.

Come ye forward, sons and daughters
Of this gem beyond compare.
Strive for honor, sons and daughters,
Do the right, be firm, be fair.
Toil with hearts and hands and voices.
We must prosper!
Sound the call, In which ev'ry one rejoices,
"All for Each and Each for All.



National Flower, Sabinea Carinalis

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