

The Gemstone Collection

Many of the major varieties of precious and semi-precious gemstones are presented in their crystalline mineral forms in this collection. These include examples of agate, alexandrite, amethyst, aquamarine, beryl, carnelian, diamond, garnet, heliodor, hessonite, jade, morganite, peridot, ruby, sapphire, tanzanite, topaz, tourmaline, turquoise, and many others.

A gemstone is a mineral that has been cut and polished. Gemstones are measured in weight by carats. 1 carat is approximately 1/5 of a gram. Most gemstones have a hardness of 5 or more on the Mohs' hardness scale.¹ Each Gemstone has its own specific properties including: hardness, luster, specific gravity, fracture, and cleavage. Gemstones are classified into different groups, species, and varieties. For example, emerald and aquamarine are both varieties of the species Beryl. Gemstones are highly valued for their rarity and beauty as well as their physical properties. Gems are usually cut or polished from the original crystal structure they are found in to become gemstones. A faceting machine is used to make the cuts on the gemstones. Older more antique models simply grind the mineral down by use of a grinding wheel. More modern faceting machines use lasers to cut the minerals and therefore reduce the risk of losing carats because of mistakes.

Links:

Semi-Precious and Precious Gemstone Information

<http://www.bernardine.com/gemstones/gemstones.htm>

Gemstone Facts and Myths

http://www.thesilver-lady.com/fun_facts.htm#1

The Gemstones: "The Flowers of the Mineral Kingdom"

http://www.thesilver-lady.com/fun_facts.htm#1

Gemstone Facts:

Many gemstones are associated with certain myths or meanings. For example, opal is traditionally considered a symbol of faithfulness and confidence.³

Sapphire and Ruby compromise more than half of all gemstones sold worldwide.

Birthstones are specific gemstones that are associated with the different months of the year.

Below is a chart showing which birthstones correspond to each month:

| Month | Birthstone |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| January | Garnet |
| February | Amethyst |
| March | Aquamarine |
| April | Diamond |
| May | Emerald |
| June | Pearl Moonstone |
| July | Ruby |
| August | Peridot |
| September | Sapphire |
| October | Opal Tourmaline |
| November | Yellow Topaz Citrine |
| December | Turquoise Blue Topaz Tanzanite |

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¹ Awesome Gems.2007. <<http://awesomegems.com/diamondfacts.html#top>>.

² “Modern Birthstones”. Bernadine Fine Art Jewelry.
2007<<http://www.bernardine.com/birthstone/modern.htm>>.

³ “Gemstone Facts”. The Silver Lady, LLC. 2007. <http://www.thesilverlady.com/fun_facts.htm#1>.