

About the Gemstones in Jewelry on OldMaidCatLady.com

Gemstones have fascinating folklore and associations. Each is also ranked from 1-10 on the Mohs scale of hardness to indicate their durability.



Citrine - a variety of quartz that comes in a range of colors from yellow to reddish-brown. Used since the Hellenistic period in Greece, much of the citrine on the market today is actually heat-treated amethyst, which can be identified by its more reddish tint. Natural citrine is paler in color. Citrine is the birthstone for November, and the planetary stone for the sun signs of Virgo and Scorpio. It may also be given for the 13th or 17th wedding anniversary. Citrine is said to promote creativity and clarity, fight depression, and stimulate memory as well as protecting several internal organs and eliminating the tendency for self-destructiveness.

Mohs scale: 7.0

Care Tips: Citrine is easily scratched, and can change color if left in sunlight or heat for several hours.



Diamond - The hardest known natural material and a “girl’s best friend”, natural diamonds are formed when carbon is subjected to great heat and pressure over 1 billion years or more, then carried toward Earth’s surface by volcanic eruptions. First used as religious icons in ancient India, in the modern age they are graded according to the “four Cs” of carat, cut, color, and clarity. Yellow diamonds are rarest, but diamonds come in many colors and the colorless stones most often used in engagement rings. Diamonds have been thought to bring their wearer strength in battle and protection from ghosts and magic, heal brain diseases, aid memory, and bring purity, joy, life, faith, innocence, and repentance. They’ve also been used to detect poison, supposedly by “perspiring” in its presence. Diamond is the birthstone of the month of April and the astrological sign of Aries. Give it as a gift on the 30th and 60th years of marriage.

Mohs scale: 10.

Care Tips: There’s not much you can do to hurt a genuine diamond! Just be careful that the mounting it’s in is secure and you don’t lose it.



Pearl - Pearls are naturally formed inside of oysters, clams, or mussels when a grain of sand or other irritant causes the animal to secrete a substance called nacre to coat it. A natural pearl can take 7-8 years to completely form. Many of the pearls on the market today are “cultured” pearls, created by introducing the sand into the mollusk’s shell. There are many other types of pearls, including those formed in freshwater mollusks. Pearls are the traditional birthstone for the month of June, and of the astrological signs of Gemini and Cancer. They may be given on the 3rd, 12th, and 30th wedding anniversaries. Pearls have good fortune, protection and wisdom associated with them in many ways, balancing emotions and improving one’s sense of self worth. They are always a welcome gift.

Mohs scale: 2.5-4.5



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Care Tips: Pearls scratch easily and can be dissolved by acidic substances such as vinegar. Humidity or a dry climate can also damage them. They should always be stored in a soft jewelry bag, put on after applying cosmetics, perfumes, or hair spray, and wiped with a soft cloth after wearing.



Peridot - This lovely bright green stone was actually mentioned in the Bible as Chrysolite. Cleopatra supposedly loved peridot, and it is the national gemstone of Egypt. Peridots have even been found in meteorites. It is the birthstone for August, and for the sign of Libra. Peridot supposedly brings its wearer good luck, strength, health, peace, protection, and sound sleep, while attracting love, bringing dreams to reality, healing hurt feelings, calming anger, soothing nerves, ridding of negative emotions like envy and protecting the lungs, sinuses, and wrists. When set in gold, it is said to dispel bad dreams, and is strongest when worn on the right arm. Give peridots on the 16th wedding anniversary.

Mohs scale: 6.5-7.0

Care Tips: Protect your peridots from scratches and sharp blows. Never use an ultrasonic cleaner on them and avoid subjecting them to drastic temperature changes.



Quartz - The second most abundant mineral in the Earth's crust, quartz has a name that comes from the Slavic word for "hard" and was considered a mystical substance by Australian Aborigines. It's been used in jewelry and artwork in Europe and the Middle East since ancient times and is the national gem of Scotland, where its use dates to the time of the Druids. Several other named stones are types of quartz, including amethyst and citrine. Smoky quartz is often marketed as an affordable alternative to chocolate diamonds. It is the birthstone for the astrological signs of Capricorn and Sagittarius. It is said to clear emotional blockages, purify primal instincts, convert negative energy into positive, calm emotional upsets, treat ailments of the kidneys, pancreas, adrenal glands, and sex organs, detoxify, counter radiation, calm nervous system disruptions, and help the wearer let go of the past and open up to growth.

Mohs scale: 7.0

Care Tips: Smoky quartz can lose its color if exposed to intense heat (300-400 degrees F) or direct sunlight. It can be scratched or chipped, and should be cleaned with plain water and soap, a soft brush, and a soft polishing cloth. It should not be soaked.



Sapphire - This non-red variety of corundum (ruby) is the second hardest natural mineral, behind the diamond. Sapphires come in many colors, from the most popular blue to pink, green, yellow, orange, brown, purple, and even colorless. It is the birthstone for September and the zodiac signs of Pisces, Taurus, Virgo, and Sagittarius. Give it as a gift on the 5th, 23rd, and 45th wedding anniversaries. It's said to bring spiritual enlightenment, fulfillment, joy, prosperity, beauty, and inner peace, as well as healing rheumatism, colic, and mental illness, promoting clairvoyance, and protecting against sorcery.

Mohs scale: 9.0

Care Tips: Because of their hardness, sapphires are very easy to care for and require no special precautions. Clean them with warm soapy water, ultrasonic cleaners, steamers, or in water with a



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touch of ammonia. Avoid wearing them when using chemicals, such as household cleaners or bleach, however.



Topaz - Coming from the Sanskrit word for “fire”, topaz has been favored by royalty including the Russian Czarinas, and one appears in the Portuguese crown jewels. Topaz comes in many colors, from reds, oranges and pinks, to gold, yellow, brown and clear. The popular pale blue shade may be irradiated and heat treated to intensify its color, as it is very rare in nature. Among other properties it has been thought to bring healing and protection from death, stimulate the endocrine system, increase strength, improve eyesight, protect from injury, and bring spiritual rejuvenation. It is the birthstone of the zodiac sign of Scorpio. Give it on the 4th and 19th wedding anniversaries.

Mohs scale: 8.0

Care Tips: The color of a topaz can fade if it’s kept in the sun. It should also be handled carefully to keep it from developing fractures. Clean it with warm, soapy water.



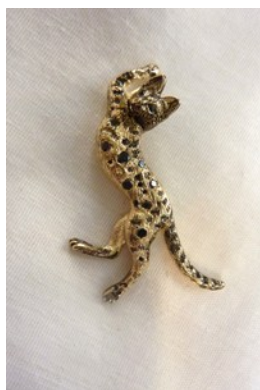
Tsavorite - A member of the garnet family with a rich green color, this gem was undiscovered until 1967 and is found (so far) only in Africa and Madagascar. Its name comes from Tsavo National Park in Kenya. Tsavorite has been used in pieces by Tiffany and Co. It is valued not only for its emerald-like color but for its greater brilliance that is said to shine even through clothing. The newness of this gem means that it doesn’t have legends or traditions associated with it...just love it for

its own beauty!

Mohs scale: 7.5

Care Tips: Tsavorites are not likely to crack or splinter, and are better suited to invisible settings than are the more delicate emeralds.

Here are just a few of our fine gemstone-bearing cat jewelry pieces:



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