

B is for Beryl

B is for Beryl, the stone with many colours, from blue, to green, yellow, colourless, or pink.

Let's look at the yellow beryl called golden beryl. This is the gem that legends say was used to promote cheerfulness and marital love, to retard laziness, and blessedly, to maintain youthfulness. This gem is also said to make one sympathetic and increase sincerity.



So what is beryl?

In reality, beryl is a large gem family with a wide variety of colours and identities. Pure beryl is colourless and is known as Goshenite. Green beryl is known as Emerald, blue beryl as Aquamarine, pink beryl as Morganite, red beryl as Bixbite, and yellow beryl is known as Heliodor.

Yellow beryl is thought to be a gift from the sun, hence the name "*helio-*" from the Greek word for sun "*helios*" and "*-dor*" from the Greek word for gift "*doron*".

Colour

All beryls are beryllium-aluminum-silicates. In a pure beryl chemical composition, the gem appears colourless. By adding foreign substances to this composition, you get the different beryl colours. A trace of chromium creates the green colour that gives you emerald. A trace of iron gives you the blue of aquamarine. A trace of manganese again will give you the pink beryl called Morganite. With yellow beryl, it is the presence of iron and uranium that give this gem its yellow hues, from a weak lemon yellow, to a warm golden colour, to a greenish yellow.

The most sought-after colour in yellow beryl is the rare intense banana-peel yellow.

Treatment

Light coloured yellow beryl is often heat treated to improve its natural body colour into a more intense yellow. Irradiation is also used to produce the yellow colour. These treatments are permanent and do not require special care.

Gem Cut

Unlike the emerald, yellow beryl seldom has inclusions and is therefore known as an eye-clean stone. For this reason this gem is popularly cut into the open rectangular or square gem cut that can reveal the clean center of the stone. Round, pear and oval cuts are also done. As this gem is often found in large natural crystals, some even as large as 30 feet long (8 meters), it lends itself perfectly to ornamental carvings. It is also fashionable to wear the smaller sized natural six-sided crystal uncut in pendants.

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Its Use in Jewellery

Yellow beryl is highly suited for wearing in jewellery as this gem has a hardness of 7.5 to 8, meaning it is a gem whose surface does not scratch easily. It also has high brilliance, great toughness, and resistance to corrosive substances. To enhance the yellow colour of this gem, it should ideally be set in yellow metal such as high karat yellow gold.

Locations

Yellow beryl was first discovered in 1910 in Namibia after which it became very popular when stunning jewellery was made for Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and his wife in 1914. World War I intervened and unfortunately put an end to the popularity of this gem. Today it is mainly found in Sri Lanka, Namibia, Brazil and Madagascar.

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