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A Flag for Mars

by Michael Orelove
Juneau, AK

A Flag for Mars
Flag Specifications
A Flag for Your Planet Activity

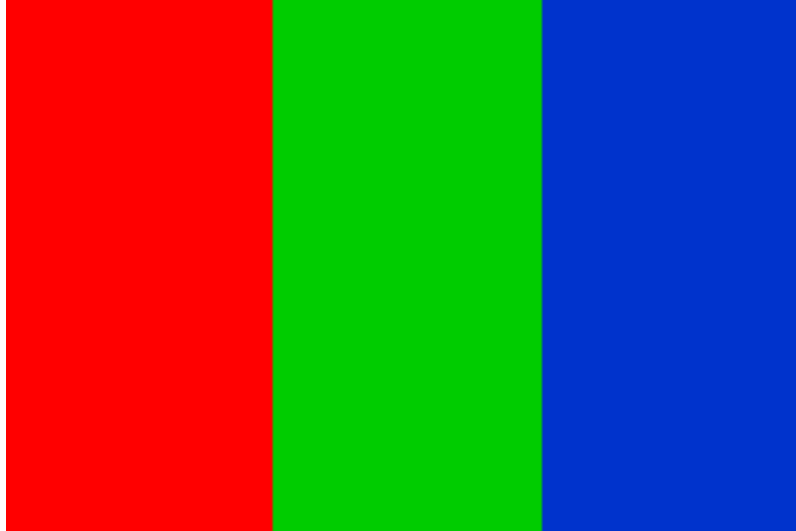
"Symbols are sacred things, and one of the chief ones that every man holds dear is the national flag. Deep down in our nature is the strong emotion that swells the heart and brings the tear and makes us follow the flag and die round it rather than let it fall into the hands of the enemy. This is no new emotion, no growth of a few generations, but an inheritance from the ages before history began." W. J. Gordon, *Flags of the World*, London, 1915.

I am a member of the North American Vexillological Association, which is dedicated to the study of flag history and symbolism.

I am also a member of the Mars Society, whose purpose is to further the exploration and settlement of the planet Mars.

At a recent Mars Society Convention I purchased a Mars flag which I first mistook to be the flag of France. This confusion motivated me to design and produce an alternative flag.

During a mission to refurbish and repair the Hubble Space Telescope, the Space Shuttle Discovery carried a Martian flag into orbit. This Mars flag was a red, green, and blue tricolor. It was originally suggested to Mars Society president Robert Zubrin by Mars Arctic Research Station task force leader Pascal Lee, during their summer 1999 site selection expedition to Devon Island.



The red, green, and blue colors derive from the stages of Mars' transformation from barrenness to life depicted in the epic "Red Mars," "Green Mars," "Blue Mars" trilogy written by Kim Stanley Robinson. Red stands for the current desert, green for a 2nd step planet with vegetation and blue for the fully terraformed blue planet Mars. Red, green, and blue are also the primary components of the spectrum, symbolizing unity in diversity, as well as light itself and thus reason and enlightenment. The tricolor form also traditionally represents the republican values of liberty, equality, and justice.

I had not read the books and did not know the significance of the elements of this Mars flag.

I started thinking about flags.

What is a flag?

A flag is a symbol of a nation, territory, office, corporation, organization, or group.

A flag's purpose is to represent a place, organization or person, generally on a rectangular piece of cloth, to be seen at a distance, often moving, and to be reproduced in quantity and in many sizes.

A good flag design should be simple, yet distinctive and meaningful. As a medium of communications, a flag must be easily recognizable, with the divisions chosen not only for aesthetic value but also to enhance the flag's symbolic meaning. The emblems need to be large and as simple as possible.

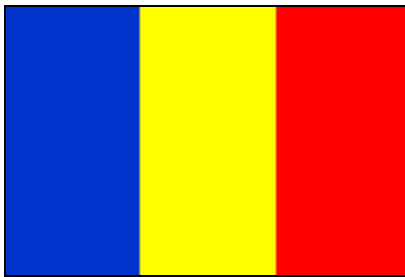
The simple Mars tricolor flag creates emotions and feelings to those who see it and know its meaning.

I had not read the books.

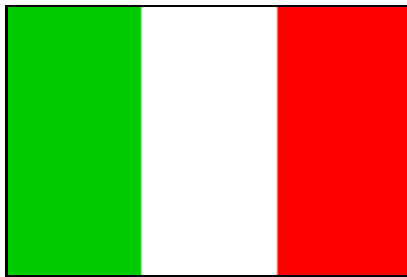
The tricolor flag design is similar to the flags of many nations, including the following flags that have two of the three colors of the red, green, and blue tricolor Mars flag:

Chad	blue	yellow	red
France	blue	white	red
Guinea	red	yellow	green
Italy	green	white	red
Mali	green	yellow	red
Romania	blue	yellow	red

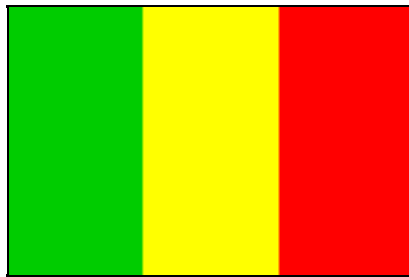
A flag to represent a planet should be distinct and not easily mistaken for a national flag.



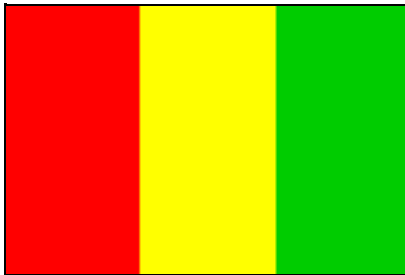
Chad



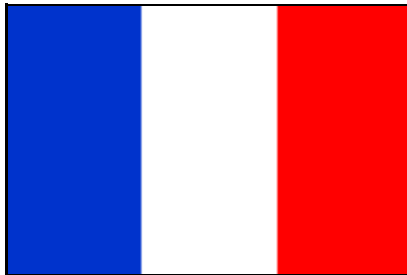
Italy



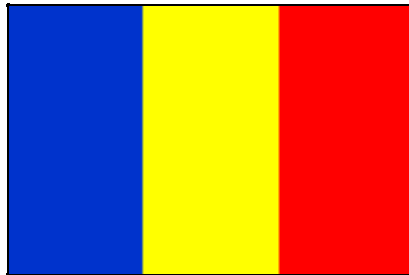
Mali



Guinea



France



Romania

I propose a new Mars Flag for consideration.



A flag for a planet should be easily distinguished from most state and national flags in shape, color, symmetry, and other flag design elements.

Shape

The width of a flag is measured along the hoist edge, the side that is affixed to the pole. The length is measured from the hoist edge to the fly end of the flag.

Although most state and national flags are rectangular, they are rectangles of different ratios. The official proportions of the U.S. flag are 10 x 19. The proportions of the Alaska flag are 125 x 177.

In general, to my people, a flag with the proportions of 1 x 2 appears a little longer and thinner than most flags in common use.

The proportions of the Mars Flag are 1 x 2. The length is exactly twice the width. When the Mars flag is folded in half, the shape will be a perfect square. No matter what size flag is made, the proportions are always 1 x 2 and there is no distortion of the design.

The proportions are easily divisible into quarters which provide for distinct astronomical elements in each

quarter.

Obverse Side of the Flag

The more important, front side of a flag. It is the side to the observer's right from the staff.

Reverse Side of the Flag

The less important side of the flag. It is the side to the observer's left from the staff.

In most cases, the reverse is a mirror image of the obverse, but some flags have different obverse and reverse and are really two different flags sewn back to back. The Oregon state flag has the state seal and the name "Oregon" on the obverse and a beaver on the reverse.



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