

EMERALD



A pear-shaped, cabochon-cut Canadian emerald (2.10 cts), enlarged to show 'garden'. (Photo: TNG)

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Emerald is a member of the Beryl family, which consists of Beryl (commonly green) itself, Aquamarine (blue), Morganite (pink), Heliodor (yellow) and Goshenite (colourless). Only green Beryl containing chromium is classed as emerald, because it is this impurity that gives the gem its beautiful colour.

Emerald is rarely free of inclusions and these are sometimes referred to as the 'garden' of the stone. Colour is all-important in emerald, inclusions are secondary. Look through the table of one with a magnifying glass and explore; it can be a wonderland. A perfect emerald can outrank a diamond in value.

Fractures are also common, which raises the



Colombian emerald showing typical 'garden'. (Photo: RH)

controversial subject of filling. Filling has been used for very many years but now commonly consists of an epoxy resin. Oils are often used to improve the appearance. Arguments have been going on in the trade as to whether filling or oiling should be declared. The general feeling is no, but agents to improve the colour must be stated.

Emeralds must be handled with care: any oil used to improve the appearance will be removed by overheating or detergents, so be careful. Diamond coating is now available to give greater resistance to wear, allegedly increasing the surface hardness to 9.6-9.8.

Ultrasonic cleaners should also be avoided, as they can cause the stone to shatter, so specify this to your jeweller should you take your jewellery in for cleaning



Brazilian emeralds, 46 pt and 44 pt. (Photo: ATG)