

The Fragrant Garden

Fragrant Plants

What's the first thing you do when spotting a flower? Most of us smell it of course. Children especially identify the sight of a blossom with fragrance. While we can occasionally be surprised, disappointed or repulsed by a plants odor, fragrance is an important aspect of gardening.



Humans can identify hundreds of odors. Many can trigger strong reactions even emotion. Using fragrant plants in the landscape is certainly not a new concept. The botanical reason for plant fragrance is simple — it's there to attract pollinators to the blooms. White or pastel blossoms seem to have stronger scents. This trait is probably to help them compete with their more colorful cousins.

Fragrance is not limited to blooms. The essential oils that provide the perfume can be found in other plant parts such as foliage, seeds and bark. Herbs are especially good examples.

Location, Location, Location

Viburnum by the front entrance to your home will invite guests to take a moment to stop and smell the flowers. Of course, you want to place fragrant plants where they can be appreciated. Remember our prevailing mountain winds come from the Southwest and directs the aroma. Also, scent intensity differs as the day progresses and humidity levels and air temperatures change. The best planting locations are:

Walkways & the Entry - guest enjoy the aroma from blooms. Scented leaves release their aroma when brushed as you walk by.

Porches, Patios & Decks - anywhere you have seating is a great place to enjoy fragrant plants, especially evening blooming plants like jasmine and moonflower. A solitary bench in the garden is an excellent place to escape.

Containers Gardens on the move - create your own portable plant aromatherapy by using containers.

Open the Window - any window that allows a breeze to enter the home can only be enhanced by adding the fragrance of plants.

Trellis to Climb - bring the fragrance up to nose level. Arbors, especially over garden gates, and pergolas bring the aroma to you.

What to Plant

Many of today's hybrids are bred for exceptional appearance. In the process, the traits that provide fragrance have diminished. Some newly introduced roses have little fragrance compared to their older cousins.

There are still plenty of fragrant plants to choose from. Heirloom or "old-fashioned" varieties tend to be fragrant. Many plant tags will indicate whether aroma is one of the plants traits. There is one very important consideration when selecting fragrant plants for the landscape, the individual gardeners personal definition of fragrant. Perfume to one person may be putrid to another. In short, it's a matter of opinion. Even among flowers most gardeners would agree smell heavenly, you will inevitably find



a guest to the garden that are overwhelmed by the aroma. Some heavily scented plants such as

gardenia, jasmine or lilac may be overpowering.

Having cleared the air on that issue, if you would like to include some fragrance in your landscape, we have some ideal plants to consider.

Most if not all herbs are fragrant. Sage and rosemary are undeniably fragrant. Creeping thyme is used as a ground cover in stepping stone walkways simply because it smells good when stepped on. Here are some of the most notable fragrant herbs.



Perennials

- Astilbe
- Dianthus
- Lily-of-the-valley
- Hosta
- Peony

- Phlox
- Russian sage
- Sedum
- Sweet Woodruff
- Verbena
- Daylily
- Primrose
- Iris
- Lily

Shrubs

- Butterfly Bush
- Gardenia
- Lilac
- Mock orange
- Osmanthus
- Roses
- Daphne
- Viburnum
- Big Sage Bush
- Silverberry
- Manzanita
- Cotoneaster
- Forsythia

Herbs - almost the entire family of herbs are super fragrant:

- Basil
- Catmint
- Chamomile
- Lavender
- Mint
- Oregano
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Scented Geranium
- Thyme

Trees

- Citrus
- Crabapple
- Flowering Cherry
- Crape myrtle
- Chitalpa
- Pine
- Fruit Trees

Ground covers & Vines

- Akebia
- Clematis
- Climbing roses
- Honeysuckle
- Jasmine
- Moonflower
- Sweet pea
- Wisteria
- Akebia
- Creeping Thyme
- Blue Chip Juniper
- Mugo Pine
- Lady Banks Rose

Bulbs

- Daylily
- Hyacinth
- Iris
- Lily
- Narcissus
- Daffodil
- Tulips
- Gladiolas

Annuals

- Alyssum
- Nasturtium
- Pansy
- Marigold
- Petunia
- Poppy
- Primrose
- Stock
- Viola
- Candytuft

Evergreens

- Juniper
- Pine
- Holly
- Euonymous
- Waxleaf Privet
- Azalea
- Deador Cedar
- Spanish Broom
- Cypress
- Desert Broom
- Silver Berry
- Rosemary



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