

Fragrant Plants

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Q: I would like to add some more fragrant plants to my yard. Do you have suggestions of plants that do well here and provide good scents?

A: There are many plants that can provide a wonderful olfactory sensory experience. Here is a short list of some that do well in this area:

Wisteria is a fragrant vine that flowers in the spring and is useful in a wide variety of settings. It is a sturdy vine that needs support and covers quickly, but its rampant growth can be kept in bounds by occasional pruning (which also can encourage re-blooming). Try to purchase wisterias in bloom to be certain of the color, which could be blue, shades of purple, or white. It doesn't need a lot of water once established and likes full sun. If you want lots of bloom, don't over fertilize! Japanese wisteria (*wisteria floribunda*) and Chinese wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*) are the most common types. The main difference between them is the type of flower—Japanese are longer and open gradually; the Chinese variety opens all at once.

Another vine with wonderful fragrance is Star Jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*, also known as Confederate Jasmine). This plant has flowers that are white with glossy, evergreen leaves. It climbs energetically, but can be kept in bounds by occasional pruning. The plant is evergreen and with the aid of a trellis can be used for screening an unsightly view. Weekly watering and partial sun are its' only requirements. Another vine, Pink Jasmine (*Jasminum polyanthum*) has intensely fragrant pinkish-white flowers and is a less vigorous climber.

Don't forget the old time favorite, Lilacs (*Syringa*). These are fragrant, reliable bloomers and are among the best known flowering shrubs. They prefer full sun and are tolerant of any soil. Water infrequently but thoroughly. They bloom in shades of purple, pink, yellow, and white. Prune them right after bloom or gather bouquets of lilacs to add scent to your house.

Roses are another popular shrub that can have very fragrant blooms. There is nothing quite like passing by a rose garden that was so fragrant it perfumes the air. The best way to decide on which roses are fragrant is to visit a nursery or rose garden while the roses are in bloom (most are in bloom now) and smell the flowers, you can then decide which ones you like best. Many of the David Austin Roses are fragrant and some of the more old time favorites such as Mr. Lincoln

have a nice scent. All roses like full sun and frequent watering. The nice thing about roses is that they come in many different colors, shapes, and sizes to fit any garden.

If you don't have a lot of space, plants can also be grown in pots on your deck or patio. Asiatic or Oriental lilies are happy in containers. They need year-round water and have a fragrance so pungent it is best enjoyed outdoors, but they are frequently used as cut flowers too.

Don't forget the wonderful fragrance of whole plants such as lavenders, rosemary or lemon balm. Many fragrant plants can be used as ground covers such as thyme (Thymus) or some mints (Mentha). Just walk across a planting of thyme or Jewel mint to release the fragrance!