

How to Use Fragrant Flowers in your Landscape

Fragrant flowers and plants are a terrific addition to any property and scent is just as important as color, contrast and texture in a landscape. You may enjoy the breathtaking green shades of foliage and the rainbow-like colors of your flower beds and rows, but nothing compares to having your heart filled with the hypnotizing aroma of scented flowers, shrubs or vines.



Fragrance is very personal and that's because everyone has a unique sense of smell. So when you're choosing fragrant plants for your garden, just use your nose. Choose scents that appeal to you and that evoke the feelings and moods you want to experience.

If you want a garden that smells as good as it looks, incorporate fragrant plants in as many places as possible. Put hyacinths beside your front door, lilacs beneath your bedroom window and Oriental lilies in planters on your patio. Edge a pathway with sweet alyssum or lavender, plant fragrant roses behind a garden bench, and surround your deck or patio with pots of gardenias, jasmine and crinum.



Some plants are more fragrant in the evening than they are during the day. These include flowering tobacco (nicotiana), night phlox, four-o'clocks and Angel Trumpets, Brugmansia sp. Locate these plants where you can enjoy them on warm summer evenings.

Where Should You Plant Your Fragrant Vegetation?

You want those flowers & shrubs scent to envelop you like a charm, so they should be planted in those areas on the property that you use the most.

- Under the house windows: let the fresh breeze and the sweet flower aromas freshen up your house and your spirit every morning you open the window.
- By the doors: every time you go through a door (the front one, the backdoor to the patio etc) you should be accompanied by the gorgeous scents of your plants and flowers.
- By the front gate: feel welcomed home every day by the scented flowers and vines guarding the front gate of you property. You can use flowery vines and climbing flowers or even trees (roses, lilacs, angel trumpets etc) to start your fragrant journey once you set foot on your property.
- By benches and around outdoor living spaces: scents should be where you are, so plant them nearby resting benches, around a garden kiosk, nearby the fireplace area, along a retaining wall or privacy screen.

Types of Plant Fragrance

Cultures throughout the world use fragrance to promote physical and mental wellbeing. These scents are often grouped by their common properties, and using these fragrance profiles can be helpful when designing your own fragrant garden.

- **Floral:** Sweet, heady perfumes that promote relaxation. Plants such as Oriental lilies, jasmine, gardenia, peony, lily of the valley
- **Fresh:** Zesty perfumes that stimulate and refresh. Plants such as lavender, mint, citrus
- **Spicy:** Deep, musky scents that are slow and sensual. Plants such as roses, carnations, sage
- **Woody:** Perfumes that promote mental acuity. Plants such as rosemary, balsam, cedar

Bloom Times for Fragrant Plants

If you want to fill your home and garden with fragrance throughout the year, select plants that bloom at different times during the growing season.

- January – paperwhites, jasmine, freesia
- February – jasmine, sweet box, winter daphne, witch hazel, freesia
- March – forced muscari, hyacinths and daffodils
- April – daffodils, hyacinths, muscari
- May – tulips, lily of the valley, creeping phlox, wallflowers, lilacs, bearded iris, azaleas, wisteria, citrus, sweetshrub
- June – mock orange, peony, rhododendron, daphne, roses, dianthus, sweet alyssum, sweet peas, stock, fringetree
- July – Oriental lilies, heliotrope, petunias, daylilies, lavender, garden phlox, sweet alyssum, yucca
- August – nicotiana, Oriental-Trumpet lilies, mignonette, clethra, four o'clocks, gardenia, tuberose, brugmansia, butterfly bush, acidanthera, freesia
- September – autumn clematis, tuberose, snakeroot, gardenia, roses, brugmansia, ginger lilies, glossy abelia, acidanthera
- October – sweet olive, variegated silverberry
- November – balsam fir
- December – paperwhites, balsam fir

Cut Flowers That Smell as Good as They Look



Most Daffodils (*Narcissus* sp.) have a nice fragrance, especially when they have been warmed by the sun. But some varieties are well known for their fragrance. These include Poeticus daffodils such as Actea, plus most Tazetta and Jonquilla varieties such as Cheerfulness and Falconet.



Tulips last a long time in a vase, and it's fun to watch the blossoms change as they mature. Not all tulip varieties are fragrant, though most have a light, sweet perfume. Tulips that are known for their fragrance include Monsella, Foxtrot, Angelique, Upstar, Creme Upstar, Mount Tacoma, Princess Irene, Red Princess, Daydream, Oxford, Oxford Elite and Ad Rem.



All types of bearded iris are fragrant, including tall, dwarf and intermediate sizes. Each color has a unique perfume; some are fruity and others are more floral. Iris are excellent cut flowers. Individual blossoms may only last a day or two, but each stem has multiple buds. Snip off spent blossoms and recut the stem every few days to extend the show.



Peonies are made for cutting. The flowers are so large, that it takes just a couple stems to fill a vase. The glossy, dark green foliage is the perfect foil for the blossoms, and the perfectly round buds add even more texture and interest. Double peonies tend to be the most fragrant. Look for fragrant heirloom varieties such as Sarah Bernhardt, Felix Crousse, Festiva Maxima, Duchess de Nemours and Dinner Plate.



Lily of the valley is a vigorous groundcover that flowers in early spring. Waxy white bells dangle from straight, stiff stems that are ideal for cutting. To create miniature bouquets or fragrant spring nosegays, combine lily of the valley with primroses, muscari, scilla, violets and fritillaria meleagris.



Large-scale bouquets, like the ones you see in the lobbies of museums, hotels and upscale restaurants, often feature flowering branches. In a vase on their own or combined with other flowers, they add height, volume and drama. To have your own supply of fragrant shrubs for cutting, consider planting lilacs, mock orange, daphne, viburnum, wisteria, gardenia, azaleas and summersweet.

Few flowers have a more devoted following than sweet peas. These annual, cool weather climbers



bloom in late spring or early summer. Though all sweet peas are wonderful cut flowers, some varieties are more fragrant than others. Seek out the ones that are known for their fragrance, such as Cupani, Painted Lady, Queen of the Night and April in Paris.



All members of the carnation family have a spicy, clove-like perfume and most are excellent cut flowers. They bloom from early to midsummer and grow best in well-drained soil. The best dianthus for bouquets are biennial *Dianthus barbatus*, better known as Sweet William (shown above) or one of the dozens of beautiful "cottage pinks" or "border pinks" such as *Dianthus* 'Doris', 'Helen' or 'Agatha'.



Lilies are ideal for bouquets because their stems are long, the flowers are big, and depending on the type, each stem can produce between 3 and 20 buds. Most lilies, including Oriental lilies, trumpet lilies, LA hybrids and Oriental-Trumpet lilies, are also intensely fragrant and their perfume will scent an entire room. Growing several different types and varieties of lilies will stretch the bloom time from summer to fall. Be sure to plant extra bulbs so you'll have plenty of stems to cut for bouquets.



Garden phlox are hardy, sweetly scented perennials with a nostalgic charm and they're ideal for summer bouquets. They come in a wide range of colors and mix beautifully with annuals such as zinnias, asters, cosmo and snapdragons. Butterflies love garden phlox and are a common sight when phlox are in bloom. The variety David is pure white; Laura is violet-blue with a white eye. You might also consider Alexandra, Nicky, Orange Perfection, Picasso and Neon Flare Blue.



There are hundreds of varieties of roses, each with its own unique style and fragrance. You can choose from climbers, shrub roses, ground cover roses and hybrid teas. Many of the most fragrant varieties are shrub roses that have been grown for generations, such as Gertrude Jekyll, Abraham Darby, Jude the Obscure and Konigen von Danemark. To extend the vase life of a rose, cut the stems at an angle with a sharp knife and put them in water immediately.