

SUMMER GARDEN SCENT-SATIONS

By Bonnie Preston, UC Master Gardener

GARDENIA jasminoides

Gardenia is a genus of about 250 species of flowering plants in the Rubiaceae family (the same family that coffee belongs to).

They are evergreen shrubs and trees that produce strong fragrant flowers from mid-spring into the summer months.

Gardenias do have a reputation for being difficult to grow, but with care can be a wonderful addition to any garden.



Tips for care:

- Plant in sun with partial shade during the summer months.
- Keep soil moist, but never soggy.
- Feed regularly during the growing season, approximately every 3 weeks.
- Keep space around shrubs to prevent damage to their shallow root system.
- Can be pruned, during the dormant season, after they have flowered.
- Better results when planted with a northern exposure.

GERANIUMS - *Pelargonium species*

The common name “geranium” is widely used for Pelargonium, but botanically speaking, it is not really accurate as there are several species of true geraniums. Geraniums (pelargoniums) are a popular hardy bedding plant, that will do equally well in patio pots. They are one of the most reliable plants in the home garden, and their versatility also allows them to be grown successfully indoors. They come in assorted bright colors adding color to any garden.



Many geraniums will bloom throughout the summer months under the right cultivation practices. They are drought tolerant, but will perform best if watered regularly, and allowed to dry out between watering. Pinch off dead flowers to encourage and extend flowering season. They grow well in full sun, but might benefit from some partial shade during the summer months.

Scented geraniums are valued for the scent of their foliage; and their flowers are secondary. Leaves vary in shape from nearly round to finely cut and almost ferny.

Most geraniums will survive the winter frost without problem, but may need damaged leaves and stems cut back after all danger of frost has past.

If growing in pots, it is important that the roots have plenty of room for the root system, and that the plants have adequate drainage preventing them from sitting in water.

SALVIA/SAGE - Some are annuals and some are perennials

There are 900 species of Salvia. Gardeners refer to the culinary species as sage and the ornamental species as salvia. Both terminologies are correct.

There are a multitude of possibilities when planting salvia plants in a garden. They come in many bright colors, some are scented, and are hardy easy plants to grow. Many different varieties are available, including deciduous and evergreen plants, as well as, perennial, annual, biennials.

There are many advantages to adding salvias/sages to your garden. Most salvias are happiest with well drained soil. They are drought tolerant, and many of the perennial varieties will survive the frost with little or no damage. They do require pruning which is best done during the dormant period, but after the danger of frost has past. You can also prune immediately after flowering or to reshape your plant.

Recommended Salvias: All can take full sun and require some deadheading to create more blooms.



'Hot Lips' - *Salvia microphylla*, perennial



'Lady in Red' - *S. coccinea*, annual
Blooms all summer long until frost.



Cleveland Sage - *S. clevelandii*, perennial
This is a very fragrant sage, which likes sun and good drainage. Flowers May to August.



'Coral Nymph' *S. coccinea*, perennial
Also called hummingbird sage. Tender perennial; blooms summer through fall.



Indigo Spires *S. Indigo Spires*, perennial
Full sun, drought tolerant. Blooms all summer. Loved by hummingbirds and butterflies. Blooms all year in mild climates.



Pineapple sage *Salvia elegans*, perennial
Cut back faded flowers 2 to 3 times a season for best flower performance.