



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Fragrant Plants Add Enjoyment to Your Yard (October 7, 2023)

by Tulare/Kings Master Gardeners

Our gardens are oftentimes a calming and serene presence in the midst of our busy world. As a further enhancement, consider adding another note this Fall by adding some fragrant plants to soothe your senses. In addition to their refreshing aroma, fragrant plants can attract pollinators, add color and texture, and have an uplifting effect on mood, which helps to reduce stress and promote relaxation.

Here are a few of our favorite scented plants:

Gardenias are a favorite solution because their white flowers perfume the air all summer long. Bring a few blooms inside, float them in a bowl, and set them around the house. There are several varieties that do well here, including Mystery and Veitchi (or Everblooming). They have glossy, dark green leaves all year and grow to be a few feet tall and wide (Mystery grows larger than Veitchi).



Gardenias can be temperamental, though. They require partial shade, acidic soil rich with organic matter, and just the right amount of water. They commonly suffer from chlorosis, indicated by the yellowing of the outer edges of the leaves while the veins remain green, which results when the plant does not get enough iron. Usually, there is sufficient iron in the soil, but the plant is unable to take it up because the soil is not acidic enough (pH 6 to 6.5). Try adding iron sulfide around the plant, following instructions on the package, to make the soil more acidic and to the plant's liking.



Roses grow amazingly well here and produce fragrant flowers of many different colors. Generally, red and lavender roses have the strongest fragrance, followed by pinks, yellows, oranges, and whites. Roses require at least six hours of sun per day. They are susceptible to pests and disease, but conditions in the Central Valley make tending these plants easy. Usually, a rose regimen amounts to nothing more than careful winter pruning, applying a time-release fertilizer, smushing a few aphids now and then (until the praying mantis or ladybugs show up and take care of them), and occasionally deadheading spent flowers. If you decide to plant roses, spend a little bit more to get a very good specimen, as some varieties offer more fragrance than others.

Lavender loves the loamy, alkaline soil of the valley, and it produces beautifully fragrant stems of flowers--they are wonderful to snip and dry and use inside to refresh closets and drawers. Rub your hands on the lavender leaves in your garden, then take in the relaxing scent of the oils. Lavender plants make wonderful small hedges and elegant dividers in flower, vegetable, or herb gardens.



Several Trees can give off beautiful scents. The saucer magnolia is a small, compact, easy-to-care-for deciduous tree or large bush with abundant fragrant tulip-shaped blooms in early spring. Flower colors can range from pink and white to yellow to deep purple, depending on the variety. The Southern magnolia blooms later and longer, producing big creamy-white lemon-scented flowers during the summer months. The Japanese mock orange is a small tree that has a delicious citrus scent in the spring. And, of course, all citrus trees have intoxicating blooms in the spring. The ideal time to plant trees is Fall so they can establish roots and become settled before the harsh heat and sun of summer, so consider adding one of these fragrant trees to your yard this weekend.

Other fragrant plants and flowers to consider are alyssum, angel's trumpet, butterfly bush, cedar, freesia, geranium, grape hyacinth, Grecian laurel (bay laurel), lilac, rosemary, star jasmine (Confederate jasmine), Victorian box tree, and wisteria. To best enjoy their fragrance, plant these trees, shrubs, vines, and flowers along the walkway to your front door, around a favorite sitting area outside, and underneath windows. Many fragrant plants are also attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds, so look for these additional beauties around your fragrant specimens.

Consider adding fragrant plants to your yard or garden--it is a delight to walk outside and take in the scent of jasmine, roses, lavender and the rest. And isn't delight what gardening is all about?

The Tulare-Kings Counties Master Gardeners will answer your questions in person:

September 30 – Visalia Farmer's Market 8 – 11 a.m., NEW LOCATION Visalia Courthouse Parking lot

October 7 - Visalia Farmer's Market, Tulare Co. Courthouse North parking lot, 8 - 11 a.m.

October 14 – Luis Nursery Plant Clinic, 139 S. Mariposa Ave, Visalia, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Questions? Call the Master Gardeners:

Tulare County: (559) 684-3325, Tues & Thurs, 9:30-11:30;

Kings County: (559) 852-2736, Thursday Only, 9:30–11:30 a.m.

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