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From the June/July 2016 Issue:

Make Perfect Scents

Planting for fragrance multiplies the sensory pleasure of your garden

The top priorities on everyone's landscaping list are great visuals—see-worthy color and texture throughout the year. Many homeowners also want auditory appeal, requesting elements that muffle traffic noise or add the gurgle of water features and tinkle of wind chimes. Peg Reynolds of Reynolds Landscaping & Garden Shop in Manahawkin and landscape architects Deborah Cerbone of Deborah Cerbone Associates in Far Hills and Randi Friesema of Cording Landscape Design in Towaco recommend you triple your pleasure with fragrance.

They suggest growing scented plants where you will most enjoy them: beside frequently used doors, just outside windows that are opened during temperate weather, and where patios and decks serve as outdoor rooms. Be cautious about attracting bees if family and friends have sensitivities, and—to avoid scents that compete or overwhelm—separate fragrant plantings if their bloom periods overlap. Those caveats aside, Cerbone, Friesema and Reynolds encourage you grow for fragrance with reckless abandon and craft bouquets as much as possible. They suggest the following plants, which like full sun unless otherwise noted. Most are deer-resistant.



Annuals, Perennials and Vines

Among annuals, **sweet alyssum**, with fine blossoms that are typically white, pink or purplish, makes a wonderful 6-inch-tall bed edging and also works well in containers, spilling out attractively, Cerbone says. **Stock**, 6 to 12 inches, blooms in purples, pinks and whites in April; it's also a great container plant and cut flower. **Sweet William** dianthus (12 to 18 inches) —with color-splashed blossoms of purples, pinks and white—has a spicy smell.

Nicotiana, or flowering tobacco, has a sweet fragrance borne within flowers of white, pink or yellow that look like tiny trumpets; about 3 feet tall, it blooms at dusk from late May to early June. The 'Sylvestris' (white) variety looks like fireworks, Reynolds says.

Lavender, a perennial herb, can be dried for use in cooking and as a moth repellent. Herb aficionados recommend it for its calming properties. It's a 12- to 18-inch-tall summer bloomer with white and purple-toned blossoms and grayish-green or green foliage. **Phlox**, a 3-foot perennial, has white, pink, lavender blooms from summer into early fall.

Also consider three perennial vines. **Wisteria**, with its white or lavender gardenia-like-scented flowers draping down like grapes, blooms in spring; this vigorous vine requires a very strong support. The intoxicating scent of **jasmine's** star-shaped flowers are total crowd-pleasers. A hardy jasmine hails from North Carolina, Reynolds says, although many New Jersey gardeners buy its tender cousins, letting the vines climb small trellises in containers or beds for one season, effectively growing them as annuals. The third perennial vine, **sweet autumn clematis**, produces tiny white flower clusters each September; the fragrance imitates jasmine.

Moonflower, a tender vine grown as an annual, opens its 6-inch-diameter white blossoms at night. Its fragrance resembles jasmine's.



Rhizomes and Bulbs

Consider two easy-growing rhizome plants. **Lily of the valley**, 6 to 12 inches tall, has an intense heavenly sweetness. Grown in light shade, the white or pink flowers dangle like tiny bells; it can be a ground cover. **German irises**, or bearded irises, produce flowers in purest white to salmon, yellow, purple, bronze and bicolors; typically 2 to 3 feet high, they can grow taller.

Six- to 12-inch-tall **Dutch hyacinths**, **wood hyacinths** and **grape hyacinths** are among spring's most fragrant bloomers. Dutch hyacinths, the dense bloom clusters often forced indoors, come in white, yellows, purples and pinks. Wood hyacinths (aka Spanish bluebells) are pink, lavender and white. And grape hyacinths, or muscari, are available in purple, blue and white.

Various **narcissuses** share their sweet scent in spring. These include 'Ehrlicheer' (12 inches, large clusters of creamy-yellow flowers), 'Baby Moon' (6 to 12 inches, yellow), 'Baby Boomer' (7 to 12 inches, yellow)—any jonquilla varieties.

Summer-blooming **Oriental lilies** 'Star Gazer' (deep pink and white) and 'Casa Blanca' (white) have a fragrance so heavy that multiple blooms in a small space can overwhelm. They grow to 3 feet.



Shrubs and Trees

David Austin English **roses** offer superior fragrance, including 'Evelyn' (coral), 'William Shakespeare' (fuchsia) and 'Charles Darwin' (lemon yellow). Also consider Sweet Drift™ (pink) roses. Among scented climbers are 'New Dawn' (pink) and 'Don Juan' (deep red).

Six- to 8-foot-tall **clethra** has long cylindrical flowers that attract butterflies and bees; its foliage is golden in fall. The shrub's blossoms are white and pink; 'Ruby Spice' is a showstopper. Another shrub (4 to 6 feet) with red and orange fall foliage is **fothergilla**; 'Mount Airy' is a desirable cultivar. Fothergilla's white flowers resemble bottle brushes, and the late winter/early spring bloom time brings cheer to the landscape when little else is appealing.

Hydrangeas are a go-to shrub for fresh and dried bouquets. Suggested varieties: 'Annabelle'—white blooms summer into fall, 4-6 feet; 'Limelight'—chartreuse/pink blooms summer into fall, 6-8 feet; 'Tardiva' —white blooms fall to early winter, 10-12 feet; and oak-leaf—white blooms summer into fall, 6-8 feet). These deciduous shrubs take sun to part shade.

Peonies, 18 inches to 6 feet (tree peonies), have a delicate scent and stunning flowers that can be spherical pompoms or more saucer-like; colors: white, pinks, salmon and yellow. They're wonderful cut flowers, and plants can live 100 years.

Korean spice **viburnum** (6 feet) has white to pink, spicy-scented flowers that can be too strong for some people. The white blossoms of Burkwood viburnum (10 feet) are milder.

Citrus-blossom-scented **philadelphus**, or mock orange, has small white flower clusters in early summer. Plants reach about 10 feet tall.

All of our landscape experts suggested **lilacs**, shrubs with blossoms of white, pink and lavender in late spring/early summer. 'Miss Kim' is a favorite that's typically about 6 to 8 feet tall. Friesema also recommends 'Ivory Silk' tree lilac, a 20-foot June bloomer with a smell that she says "isn't as in-your-face" as the shrub.

Chionanthus, aka fringe tree, has sweet-scented, eye-catching white feathery blossoms in midspring. It maxes out at 12 to 20 feet.

Evergreen **Southern magnolias** (to 40 feet tall and wide) bring their sweet scents to summer with bowl-shaped white blossoms about 8 inches across. The foliage is often used for seasonal wreaths and swags.



More, Please!

If you just can't get enough fragrance in your garden, experts at Deborah Cerbone Associates in Far Hills, Reynolds Landscaping and Garden Shop in Manahawkin and Cording Landscape Design in Towaco offer the following additional options. These plants are deciduous except as noted and are listed with descriptive details as merited. Most attract butterflies and can tolerate full sun.

- **Bee balm**, a perennial herb about 3 feet tall and wide; red summer blooms.
- **Catmint** (aka nepeta), a perennial; the popular 'Walker's Low' variety, 18-36 inches, has blue-violet blooms summer to fall.
- **Concolor fir**, 40 feet tall/20 feet wide; bluish evergreen tree with subtle-smelling needles.
- **Cornelian cherry dogwood**, 20- to 30-foot tree; bright-yellow strongly fragrant blooms in early spring.
- **Daylilies** (perennials) can be fragrant; spring-blooming 'Hyperion' (3 to 4 feet, pale yellow) and 'Gentle Shepherd' (2-plus feet, white with yellow center) are particular favorites of Far Hills landscape architect Deborah Cerbone. Note that most daylilies aren't fragrant.

- **Dwarf 'Nikko' deutzia**, 24- to 36-inch tall/36-inch wide shrub; showy white flowers in spring; can take shade.
- **Exbury azalea**, 4- to 6-foot-tall deciduous shrub; yellow or orange blooms in spring with a sweet, not overly strong, scent.
- *Hosta plantaginea*, an 18- to 28-inch-tall perennial with large grooved leaves; shade.
- **'Little Henry' sweetspire**, 24- to 36-inch tall/wide shrub, white/cream/tan flowers in early summer; part to full shade.
- **Mint**, a 12- to 18-inch-tall deciduous perennial herb that can be 3 feet wide; fragrant foliage and summer flowers of pink, violet, lavender and white; invasive, so plant in controlled situations.
- **Sweetbay magnolia**, 30- to 40-foot-tall/20-foot-wide evergreen tree; white baseball-size flower; likes wet feet but keep it out of winter wind; prefers light shade.
- **Rosemary**, evergreen herb with many varieties; standard is 4 to 6 feet tall and 2 feet wide; foliage is aromatic; repeat blooms can be pink, blue, lavender, white; zero-degree temperatures will kill plants.
- **Sage**, a 24- to 36-inch-wide deciduous perennial herb; aromatic foliage; rose/violet/lavender blooms in late spring/summer.
- **'Serotina' honeysuckle vine**, 20 feet; pink bloom mid-summer to early fall.
- **Scented geraniums**, 18- to 24-inch annuals; odors mimic chocolate, citrus, apple, nutmeg.
- **Sweet box** (*Sarcococca confusa*), 3- to 4-foot wide and 4- to 6-foot tall evergreen shrub; white flowers.
- **Thyme**, 12- to 18-inch tall/24-inch-wide evergreen perennial herb sometimes grown between steppingstones; aromatic foliage; rose and white blossoms in midspring.
- **Violets**, 6- to 12-inch shade-tolerant perennials, can be used as a groundcover.
- Witch hazel, 8- to 12-foot tree; gold tassel-like blooms in fall/winter.
- 'Sunny Knock Out,'™ 3-4 feet tall, yellow blossoms from spring to fall
- Yoshino cherry, 12- to 20-foot tree; pale pink spring blossoms have an almond scent (other cherry blossoms also are fragrant).

The first plant Mary Vinnedge installed outside her new home was 'Ehrlicheer' narcissus. She loves its fragrance.