



SCENTED PLANTS

by John Mason

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FORWARD

Scented plants can be either a delight or a curse. For many people, there is nothing more pleasing than a garden filled with fragrance, but for others who suffer allergies, certain plants can make them physically ill; sometimes very seriously.

Some scented plants (eg. Lavender and Eucalyptus) are unlikely to be a problem to any of your neighbours or friends. Others including Jasmine, Gardenia and Citrus; while a delight to many people, are common problems for others.

These problems should not stop you from growing scented plants, but they should cause you to choose what you grow carefully and appropriately for the place that you live. If your garden is on a large property, away from other people, your choices might not be as important, provided they do not affect your own family.

If however, you live on a small property, surrounded by neighbours, frequented by passers by, it may be a responsible thing to avoid problem plants, particularly those with very strong scents.

CHAPTER 1 GROWING SCENTED PLANTS

Gardens are a delight at any time, but never more so than when in full bloom and enriched by embracing fragrances. All too often these are temporary highlights rather than permanent characteristics of a garden.

Gardens can however, be fragrant and colourful all year round if you plan to achieve that.

We usually think of colour and scent as coming from the flowers, but that isn't always the case. Colour and scent can also come from foliage, bark and fruits as well.

Consider conifers or Eucalyptus trees which have their own characteristic aromas, irrespective of the time of year. Consider the berries on a cotoneaster,

the fruit on an apple or the rich autumn foliage of so many deciduous trees.

Scents may also not always be fragrant. Some may be very pungent or offensive in some way, or simply be too strong for your tastes. Some of the scents may also create allergy problems for some people.

By careful selection, however, of your plants you can have a continuously changing array of different colours and fragrances to delight your senses.



Eucalyptus youmgiana

CHOOSING FRAGRANCES

Fragrance is for many people, one of the most enchanting characteristics of a garden. Even though some varieties of roses, herbs and cottage plants are not strongly scented, many are. Some release fragrance from the flowers, others from the foliage. Some plants will smell strongly at certain times of the year, irrespective of where you plant them, while other plants need to be brushed or crushed to release the fragrant oils, and as such must be planted between stepping stones or spilling over the edges of garden beds.



Hyacinth



Convallaria Lily of the Valley

THE RIGHT SCENT

You should choose carefully when deciding what scented plants to grow. Too much scent or the wrong combination of fragrance can be overpowering, or not as pleasant as it otherwise might be. Consider the time of year when a plant releases its scent. Daphne and gardenia for instance, only smell when they are in flower. Other plants are most fragrant in warmer weather. If you want fragrance all year round, you should select and plant a sequence of varieties to do just that. If you wish to grow two varieties which produce different strong scents at the same time, plant them at opposite ends of the garden so their scents don't intermingle and conflict.