

Spring scents

by Noni Young



Gardenias

The crisp white flowers of the gardenia emit a beautiful scent. Gardenias are native to subtropical areas and will grow best in a warm position with damp, rich soil. They don't like cold climates or frost so, in Melbourne, it's best to plant them in a north facing position that is protected from the coldest temperatures in winter. There are several varieties of Gardenia on the market which include 'Florida' which is a shrub form to 1.5m and 'Radicans' which has a low, spreading form.

Orange Jessamine

A really versatile shrub that is great on its own or as a hedge. This plant (*Murraya paniculata*) is in the same family of plants as citrus and has sweetly perfumed, orange blossom-like flowers in spring.

Jasmine

A scent that many would connect with spring is the smell of Jasmine as it seems to sprawl uncontrollably over suburban fences. A less invasive option and a great evergreen climber in the garden is Chinese Star Jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*). It will grow in most light conditions and holds its dark green foliage low to the ground which makes it an excellent choice to create a green wall in the garden. In spring it becomes a mass of small, white, scented flowers that last well into summer.

Viburnum

This group of deciduous and evergreen shrubs have showy flowers and heavenly scent. For spring fragrance you can't beat Burwood's Viburnum (*Viburnum x burwoodii*) or Japanese Viburnum (*Viburnum japonicum*).

At the entrance to my front garden is a Sweet Pittosporum and it is one of the first plants to flower in spring. Each year around late August, early September I catch the first hints of its scent and I feel a sense of joy as I know that the warmer months are on the way and winter is behind me.

Smell can evoke so many emotions and the scent of certain plants can remind you of so many things. Luculia and freesias remind me of my grandmother, gardenias remind me of holidays to Queensland and Daphne tells me I'm about to have another birthday!

Fragrance in the garden can be just as impactful as colour. A well placed fragrant plant adds another dimension to the garden and they can be strategically placed for year round impact in just the same way colour can. For example Daphne will give a heady fragrance to the garden in winter while gardenias take over in spring/summer. Planting these plants near the front door where the scent will be there for all who enter the home is a great way to get maximum impact.

Here are some beautiful spring-scented plants for consideration:

Noni Young, Horticulturalist and Garden Designer.
www.noniyoung.com.au