



Photos by Karen Panter

Matthiola incana



Petunia x hybrida 'Evening Scentsation'



Dianthus 'Supra Pink'

An ode to the sweet smells of summer

Even in Wyoming, you can't miss the sweet smells of summer, especially in the evening. Many plants, including some of our favorite annuals, perennials, shrubs—and yes, even a few trees—are quite fragrant.

As summer draws to a close, take a moment to consider the smells and colors you'd like to add to your garden next year.

Aromatic annuals

Annuals provide many benefits during the growing season, including continuous color and fragrance. Many types of Sweet William (*Dianthus barbatus*) have very fragrant flowers and are easily grown in Wyoming's climate. There are a number of different varieties, some of which have a somewhat

cinnamon-like smell. Colors include reds, pinks, whites, and many bicolors.

Another fragrant favorite is sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*). Alyssum is great for rock gardens and borders as it is low-growing and wide, and varieties are available mostly in shades of pink and white.

Heliotrope (*Heliotropum arborescens*) is another annual with a pleasant scent. Flowers are blue, violet, purple, or white. The plants are also attractive accents for the garden, maturing at about 18 inches tall and wide.

Tried and true

Pansies, stock, and sweet peas are standbys often associated with the old-fashioned cottage gardens

of older generations. Many varieties of pansies (*Viola x wittrockiana*) are quite fragrant, and colorful to boot. There are so many varieties that it's hard to pick a favorite! Colors available include white, yellow, orange, violet, pink, blue, purple, and everything in between.

Stock (*Matthiola incana*) and sweet peas (*Lathyrus odoratus*) are well known for their classic flowers as well as their sweet aromas. Stock makes a wonderful cut flower with colors ranging from pink to cream, white, apricot, and purple. Common sweet pea colors are pink, white, and lavender. Note that sweet peas require some type of trellising so they can climb.



Lilium spp.



Viburnum flowers

Other annual “scentsations”

Other annuals to consider for their fragrances include many marigolds (*Tagetes* spp.)—and don’t forget the scented geraniums (*Pelargonium* spp.)! Marigolds are available in a wide range of sizes, flower shapes, and flower colors including yellows and oranges, and have an unmistakable earthy aroma. Scented geraniums are available in a number of “flavors,” including lemon, cinnamon, rose, and chocolate. Some, like citronella, have mosquito-repelling characteristics as well.

One additional fragrant plant to consider is *Petunia x hybrida*, also known as ‘Evening Scentsation.’ A 2017 All-America Selections winner, it boasts blue flowers with a scent that is reminiscent of hyacinths, honey, and roses.

Perennial perfume

Many herbaceous perennials add fragrances to our gardens as well. Among those that thrive in

Wyoming are irises (*Iris* spp.). They are tough plants with gorgeous flowers of varying colors and color combinations. A bonus is their fragrance, especially noticeable in the evening and when brought indoors as cut flowers. Equally as fragrant are lilies (*Lilium* spp.), although in Wyoming, make sure to purchase those suited to USDA hardiness zone 4 or colder. Visit bit.ly/usda-plant-hardiness-maps for more information on hardiness zones in your area.

Another old-fashioned type of flower prized for its fragrance is the peony (*Paeonia* spp.). The flowers are several inches wide and very showy, ranging from pinks and reds to white. They are also quite aromatic, providing an unmistakable scent.

Fragrant and flavorful

In a fragrant garden, who could leave out herbs? Some perennial herbs, like thyme (*Thymus praecox pseudolanuginosus*), can

be used as ground covers or as grass alternatives. In fact, thyme releases its wonderful aroma when stepped on! Perennial herbs that thrive in Wyoming also include some species of lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) and many mints (*Mentha* spp., *Nepeta x faassenii*). Culinary sages (*Salvia officinalis*) also help fill the scent niche in the garden.

Annual herbs are also fragrant staples in the landscape. Examples include sweet basil (*Ocimum basilicum*), coriander/cilantro (*Coriandrum sativum*), dill (*Anethum graveolens*), marjoram (*Origanum majorana*), oregano (*Origanum vulgare*), and, of course, rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*). Note that rosemary may overwinter at lower elevations in Wyoming.

Sweet-smelling shrubs

Lilacs (*Syringa* spp.) and viburnums (*Viburnum* spp.) are some of the most fragrant plants



Viburnum

in the landscape. Lilacs have been used for fragrance and spring color for generations all over the world. There are so many varieties

available that it is difficult to name just a few. Viburnums produce beautiful white to pinkish flowers in spring and are also wonderfully fragrant. Many viburnums are also showy much later in the season, turning to a reddish-purple color in autumn.

Other fragrant shrubs to consider include sages (*Artemisia* spp.), mock orange (*Philadelphus coronarius*), and clove currants (*Ribes* spp.). And don't forget roses (*Rosa* spp.)! As a species, roses are incredibly fragrant and many are less labor-intensive than one might expect. Check out some of the newer varieties, as roses are constantly bred for disease and

insect resistance, flower color, and fragrance.

Honeysuckles (*Lonicera* spp.) also deserve a mention. Some species are vining and others bushy, but almost all are aromatic.

And don't forget...

Yes, trees—specifically, evergreen conifers such as pines (*Pinus* spp.) and junipers (*Juniperus* spp.)!

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