



Northeast

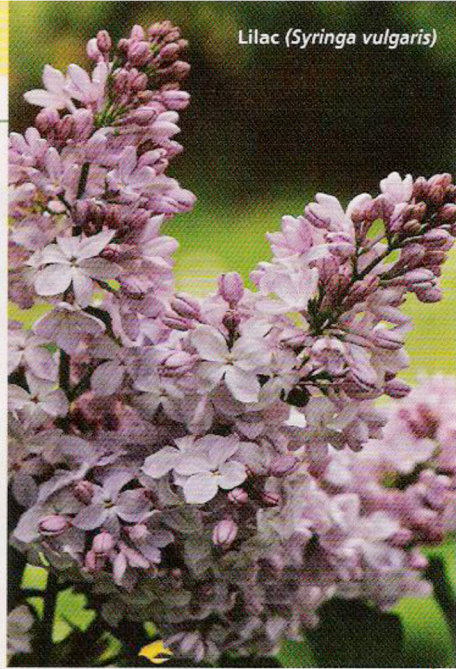
A subtle shift, a scent in the air, signals the true arrival of spring. The harsh, dry air of winter gives way to the soft, rich perfume of soil and rain and plants—fragrances that evoke a different place and time.

• Lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*) takes me back to my grandmother's tidy, picket-fenced garden where we picked handfuls of the emerald green stems with tiny, nodding white bells. This tough, slowly spreading groundcover thrives in sun or shade.

• No cottage garden would be complete without a lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) at the corner. Fragrant white varieties include 'Madame Lemoine' and 'Krasavitsa Moskvyy'. Dark purple 'Charles Joly' and blue 'President Lincoln' add sparks of color as well as perfume.

• Pot up the old-fashioned scent of summer with annual stock (*Matthiola*) and heliotrope (*Heliotropium arborescens*). Deep purple, vanilla-scented heliotrope 'Marine' attracts butterflies by day, while spicy clove-scented stock flowers release their heady perfume in the evening—a welcome greeting at the end of the day.

Contributed by Ann Whitman, who lives and gardens in Bolton, Vermont, in the scenic Lake Champlain Valley.



Jerry Pavia

Midwest



Peony (*Paeonia lactiflora*)

David Speer

Fragrant flowers can stop you in your tracks in a spring garden, but be sure to cut a few blooms for the house, too—they smell even better in a vase on your desk or the kitchen table. Here are some of my favorites:

• Lilacs (*Syringa vulgaris*) have a heady, long-ago fragrance; they

bloom in late April in Kansas City, and if the days are cool the flowers last for weeks. Little *Syringa patula* 'Miss Kim' blooms later, on more compact plants.

• Clove currant (*Ribes odoratum*) is covered with tiny, yellow, heavily clove-scented flowers in mid-spring. The foliage, which looks a bit like parsley, turns bright yellow in fall. Give this suckering native shrub room to grow.

• Peonies bloom robust and heavy in cool Midwestern springs. Their frilly flowers may smell like honey or roses; some gardeners say they have a hint of talcum powder.

• Basil and parsley are my favorite fragrant herbs; I plant them among the flowers and pinch them every time I walk by.

Contributed by Marty Ross, who lives in Kansas City, Missouri, and writes a monthly gardening column for Universal Press Syndicate.

Southwest

Our region is blessed with a bounty of fragrant (and sometimes downright stinky) plants that are well-adapted to local conditions. Below are a few of my favorites:

• Hummingbird mint (*Agastache cana*): I was introduced to this mint family plant as "Double Bubble Mint" and I still think that bubble gum it what its scent most recalls. Besides its fragrance, its red tubular flowers are hummingbird magnets. This plant does best in the mid to high deserts, but will grow with extra water at lower elevations.

• Cleveland sage (*Salvia clevelandii*): This intensely aromatic plant grows to shrubby proportions (3 to 4 feet high and wide) and in spring is covered in whorls of showy dark blue to purple flowers. Its dried leaves are often tied together and burned as incense.

• Mt. Lemmon marigold (*Tagetes lemmonii*): Whether you consider Mt. Lemmon marigold fragrant or just stinky is highly individual. I find the acerbic scent sagelike and invigorating, much like its profusion of yellow composite flowers that make a fine fall show hovering above the ferny foliage.

Contributed by Scott Calhoun, a garden designer and freelance writer living in Tucson.



Agastache cana

Pete Krumhardt