

Creating a Scented Garden

by Jacque Garside

It was announced at the club meeting way back in November 2014 that the club would sponsor a member to enroll on one of the day courses offered by the **RHS at Harlow Carr Garden, Harrogate**. We could take our pick from the courses and workshops offered for 2015.

I collected a copy of the prospectus from John Kitching whose idea it was to promote sponsorship. What a brilliant and forward thinking idea!

My love of gardening goes back to childhood and then from Horticultural College to study for my NDH at Studley College in Warwickshire many moons ago.

Also something must be in my genes as my Granddad was Head of the Orchid House at Kew Gardens in London in the early 1900s.

It did not take long for me to choose the workshop '**Creating a Scented Garden**' led by Dr Rachael Petheram, resident florist at Doddington Hall near Lincoln and proprietor of 'Catkin Flowers'. She runs many courses at Doddington Hall, RHS Harlow Carr, Welbeck School of Artisan Food and the Chelsea Physic Garden.

The topic, "Creating a Scented Garden", is very dear to my heart as for 20 plus years I have been a Complementary Therapist and worked in Drug Units, Hospices, HIV Units and in the Complementary Unit at the Christie Hospital using Aromatherapy Oils

20 years ago travelling to Romania with the Manchester Fire Brigade to its sponsored Orphanage I used my skills as an Aroma therapist for many weeks with the Orphans, Initially using just the 'Signatory Note' of the scent of Lavender August folia. Introducing this scent to these traumatised infants and children helped to calm the Olfactory senses long before starting to work and massage these poor little haunted souls.

I decided on the course for Wednesday 01 July (10.00 to 4.00pm). I arranged to go the day before by train from Stalybridge Station. Fortunately I have a good friend living in Harrogate who collected me from the station, fed, bed, watered me and next day drove me to Harlow Carr.

Well! Little did I know that that this was going to be the hottest day of the year. The course was held in the Eco friendly building. Yes! you've guessed it, no air conditioning, phew! 100deg F and counting; the poor tutor by lunchtime was melting and wilting like all her enthusiastic students!

The course was designed to help us create our own fragrant space within a garden as well as covering the therapeutic use of these fragrant plants.

The day included an illustrated talk covering a choice of plants to ensure fragrance from January through to December plus a guided walk through the Scented Garden of Harlow Carr and even better the opportunity to take cuttings from the teaching garden. 'Tesco' bags at the ready, no secretive opening and closing of handbags and hoping no one sees you!

I was 'happy as Larry' as they say; like 'a kid in a toffee shop'; only this kid was taking

as many cuttings as she wanted without a CCTV in sight and taking copious notes at the same time. Wow!

'Creating a Scented Garden' - just think about the scent, for example, of a bluebell wood, how transient it is, the power of the hypnotic smell and how it affects your emotions.

Smells can take us back in time. My own recollection is 'Lily of the Valley' that my Nan used to wear. Having been a Florist as soon as I open the box and smell Chrysanthemums then put them into water transports me back in time.

How do you describe scent when creating a new space? How do you introduce scent into the garden?

The way we identify smells can be connected to our sense of taste. A good idea is to associate your scent palate to wines and food; try and note if it is woody, herbal, or spicy. Our Olfactory sense is strong enough to help us form links to the past, to people and to places.

Fragrance Is a chemical compound that varies that with the weather and can change our perceptions as we inhale it up our nasal passages. We have fine fibres (Filia neurons) which absorb the scent and send messages to the brain which can change our moods, emotions and behavior, One of the areas where fragrance can be useful is with Alzheimer patients to help access memories by pairing an event to a scent.

When designing your scented garden from scratch certain basics need to be first considered. Is it for a small corner or a big plot? What already exists?

Then step back and measure the space, sketch out your ideas on paper and then roughly plot them out on the ground.

Ensure you incorporate the general principles of Balance, Harmony Contrast, Scale and Proportion.



There are some extra rules for scented gardens:

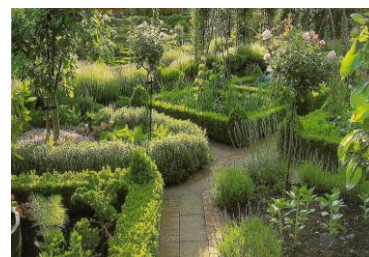
Shelter : the need for a still area; trap scent in an exposed area by enclosing it with Hedging or Willow hurdles.

Orientation: use the Sun to promote the release of scents.

Establish layers: create them with different plant types of varying height.

Overall, think scent!

Structure is provided by creating the permanent framework using boundary structures, internal divisions and vertical elements to give the sense of space.....
.....and don't forget the snow test!



Fragrant Trees form the vertical element of the garden structure:



Yoshino Cherry 'Daybreak' (*Prunus x yedoensis* 'Daybreak')

Jack Scheper © 2003 Floridata.com

- Scented Magnolias
- Walnut (leaves highly scented)
- Prunes yeodensis
- Fraximus ornis (creamy white flowers in the Spring)

Fragrant Shrubs:



Choisya ternate; Mexican Orange blossom
Daphne, s odora; a hint of dark green
Daphne bholua; An awesome smell
Philadelphus Belle Etoile; single flowers scent a knock out
Viburnum carlessii; Mock Orange.

Fragrant Hedges:



Osmanthus burkwoodi
Jasmine (smell)
Rosemary
Lavender
Thuja

Climbers:



- Roses,
- Honeysuckle (very vigorous Graham Thomas)
- Jasmine
- Trachelium (likes shade, smells like Jasmine)
- Clematis Armandii
- Passion Flower (must be frost free)
- Wisteria sinensis (the smell is wonderful!)

Structural features are places to enjoy sitting and walking:



An Arbour is somewhere to sit: a Pergola is somewhere to walk: Obelisks for Annuals (sweet peas): Wires (Clematis armandii): Scented living walls: Raised beds and planters: Underfoot paving flags (non flowering Chamomile ,Creeping Thyme, Dune Valley, Silver Queen ,Ladys Bed): Seats can be plated with Chamomile.

Winter Scented plants:



Sweet Box
Lonicera fragrantissima
Viburnum bodnantense
Wintersweet
Witch Hazel (fantastic in a pot, just sitting there in the winter)

Night scented plants:



Our sense of smell is heightened at night!
Buddleia (photo sensitive at night and attracts moths)
Sweet Rocket (a biennial, scent in the evening)
Evening Primrose,
Night scented stock.

Scented Plants with Fragrant foliage:

Lemon Verbena

Lemon Balm

Tender Sages (*salvia elegans*)

Scented Geraniums (*pelargoniums*; Attar of Roses, Lady Plymouth, Mable Grey)

Lavender (*lavandula*) Lillington Castle

Artemesia

Scented Border:



Perennials

Phlox (most highly scented the paler the flowers mid to late summer white mauve and pink have the most fragrance)

Peony (*Duchesse de Nemours*, *Sarah Bernhardt*. Joe Benson, grower of Peonies, near Lincoln a good source to purchase from)

Pinks (*Mrs Sinkins*, and *Bookham Perfume*. Medieval gardeners said they were presents from the Gods. Like a good baking in the sun well watered and feed)

Annuals and Biennials:



Some you can sow direct!

Sweet Peas (Autumn sowing).

Night Scented Stock (sow into the ground in Autumn. Better fragrance in poor soil)

Nicotiana alata / *sylvestris* (half hardy best sown as the Spring Annual)

Mathiola incana Alba (biennial)

Sweet Rocket (biennial)

Wallflower (biennial)

Evening Primrose (biennial)

Sweet William (biennial)

Bulbs:



Hyacinth orientalis (White Pearl , Knight of the Blues)
Narcissi (any of the tazetta species)
Lilies (L.Orientalis Casa Blanca)
Lily of the Valley (plant in grit and vermiculite)
Tulips (plant 12ins deep)

Roses

Old Roses are the best for fragrances. Hybrid Tea flowers more but less scent, old roses do not need pruning. The best smelling roses to buy are David Austin's, Blue Moon, The Ingenious Mr Fairchild and Spirit of Freedom.

Old Roses:



Charles De Mills (Gallica rose 5ft high)
Madame Isacc Pereire (4 ft Bourbon)
Rose Isfahan (Damask Rose)

David Austin Climber Roses:



Gertrude Jekyll
Evelyn
Scepter'd Isle.

Tea Roses:



Chandos Beauty (a lovely scent!)
Aromatherapy
Blue Moon.
Mulch well and feed after pruning .
Prune in the Spring cut down by 1/3,
Prune well feed after then keep cutting the blooms
(Uncle Toms rose tonic Potassium feed)

And finally to capture that lingering scent!

Fill a small bottle with flowers, e.g. rose petals, lavender, lily of the valley. Top up the bottle with vodka and leave for a week. You can dilute with witch-hazel water. Strain and replace flowers weekly for as long as they are in season.

Or, pack a jam jar with fresh flowers, e.g. lily, narcissi. Fill the jar with oil e.g. jojoba or sweet almond, stand for 24 hours. Place the plant material in a muslin bag and squeeze the oil back into the jar. Repeat using fresh plant material for at least 1 week.

And enjoy!

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Oh yes! I enjoyed my full day immensely. All I can say is if you have the opportunity to do a course at any of the RHS Gardens go for it! The standard and tutors are of the highest quality.

Most importantly have fun, that's what gardening is all about, it's not having the biggest blooms, it's having the most fun growing them!

A big '**Thank You**' to the club from me, **Jacque Garside**, for a great day!

(Glossop Gardeners member who has enjoyed being a club member for the 5 years)

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