



18th August 2025

Fill your summer nights with fragrance with British Garden Centres

Most gardeners make the most of their outdoor spaces during the day, soaking up the sunshine, enjoying bursts of colour, and watching busy pollinators go about their work. But gardens don't go to sleep when the sun sets; some plants come alive in the twilight hours. As daylight fades, certain flowers release intoxicating scents, drawing in a selection of night-flying moths, bats, and other nocturnal visitors. British Garden Centres has put together its top night-scented plants that will perfume your summer evenings.

Dianthus (Pinks): This perennial packs a spicy, clove-like scent into its compact blooms. Available in pink, red, and white, dianthus tucks neatly into pots, window boxes, or the front of borders. Its size makes it ideal for small spaces, and pollinators love visiting during the day, before the plant continues giving into the night.

Evening Primrose (Oenothera): A true dusk to dawn performer, evening primrose opens its sunny yellow flowers at night, releasing a sweet perfume that carries far. Though best known in yellow, there are also soft white and blush-pink varieties. These blooms draw moths, which in turn help pollinate other plants in your garden.

Gardenia: Known for their glossy green leaves and voluptuous white flowers, gardenias provide a strong, intoxicating summer fragrance. Best grown in sheltered spots or containers in the UK.

Honeysuckle (Lonicera): Much loved for its heady scent during the day, honeysuckle's fragrance deepens at night. Perfect for covering trellises, arches, pergolas, or fences, it softens hard lines while offering nectar for moths. Colours range from creamy yellows to flushed pinks.

Lemon Balm (Melissa officinalis): While not a flower, lemon balm is a strongly aromatic herb with a fresh lemon scent, great for sensory gardens and near seating areas.

Nicotiana (Tobacco plant): A long flowering annual whose trumpet-shaped flowers open in the evening, filling the air with a lily-like perfume until sunrise. Colours vary widely from green, pink, white, and red, and in daylight, they provide welcome splashes of brightness while waiting to release their night-time fragrance.

Night Phlox (Zaluzianskya capensis): Though modest looking by day, night phlox transforms after dark, revealing white star-like faces and releasing an irresistible honey and vanilla perfume. It's low growing and ideal for containers or lining pathways you'll walk along at night.

Sarcococca (Sweet Box): A winter-flowering shrub with highly fragrant white flowers that emit a sweet, honey scent. It's an excellent choice for shady spots and provides fragrance when little else is blooming.



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Nemesia: An annual known for its sweet rhubarb scent, ideal in containers or hanging baskets near seating or windows.

Night scented Stock (*Matthiola longipetala*): During daylight, stocks may look rather plain, but after dusk, their rich, clove-like scent is released into the air. Scatter the seeds along the edges of patios, paths, or beneath seating to enjoy their perfume up close.

Trachelospermum (Star Jasmine): Evergreen leaves, white pinwheel flowers, and a sweet, exotic scent make this climber one of the finest plants for evening gardens. Train it on trellises near doors or seating, so the fragrance drifts indoors.

Growing tips

The best thing about night scented plants is that you don't need acres of space to enjoy them. Whether it's a border, pots by the patio, or even a single planter on a balcony table, it's possible to create an evening scent that will make you want to linger outdoors long after dusk.

We recommend positioning your plants near patios, seating areas, open windows, or along paths you'll use after dark, so their perfume drifts naturally. Combining climbers like honeysuckle or star jasmine with low border favourites such as night phlox or dianthus ensures fragrance is delivered at different heights.

You can also stagger your plants to ensure fragrance from late spring to early autumn by planting a mix of annuals, perennials, and climbers to keep the scent coming for months.

Julian Palphramand, Head of Plants at British Garden Centres, said: "A night scented garden carries the beauty of the day seamlessly into the evening, filling the air with fragrance in the summer nights. With the right plants in the right places, your outdoor space can become a sanctuary after sunset and will smell pretty sweet too!"

ENDS:

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Notes to Editors: British Garden Centres (BGC) is the UK's largest family-owned garden centre group, with 73 centres around the country. The group is owned and led by the Stubbs family, who also own and operate Woodthorpe Leisure Park in Lincolnshire. BGC was launched in 1990 with the opening of Woodthorpe Garden Centre, funded by brothers Charles and Robert Stubbs. Since 2018, it has expanded rapidly with the acquisition of 50 garden centres, allowing it to grow from its heartland to the business it is now, with 73 garden centres spread from Carmarthen to Ramsgate, Wimborne to East Durham. The group has a team of 2,700 colleagues working across the garden centres, restaurants, three growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres and Woodthorpe Leisure Park and Woody's Restaurant & Bar.

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