

Introduction:

Fragrance is one of the essential senses out of five senses that make a complete garden, the others being Sight, Touch, Taste and Hearing. A garden without fragrance is like a body without its soul. Every garden should have fragrant creepers, climbers, trees and shrubs, besides flowers.

Indian flora has a pronounced, intense fragrance which is soothing and even intoxicating unlike the Western flora which may have beautiful structure and colours but only a faint fragrance. Rooted in our tradition, heritage and religion, fragrant flowers and creepers are universally used in homes, weddings and religious ceremonies. Women adorn their hair daily with *gajras* and *venis*. Our literature has immortalized the emotional and aesthetic beauty of fragrant flora. Kalidasa in *Meghdootam*, *Kumarsambhavam* and *Abhigyan Shakuntalam* and Jai Shankar Prasad in later times are two shining examples. The Moghals continued the fragrant theme and Noor Jehan promoted the perfumery industry to capture and preserve the fragrance in bottles as *attar*. Indian sages and Aryurveda gurus researched and discovered the medicinal and healing properties of fragrant flora.

There are hundreds of species of creepers but I have selected a few which are hardy, easy to grow in the Indian climate and have numerous uses.

1.Rose Creeper/Climber: The king of flowers:

Genus: Rosa

Family: Rosaceae

Propagation: by cutting.

Sun: seeds sunshine for 6-8 hours

Planting time: October

Soil: Easy to grow in well drained, rich loamy soil with peat moss.

Flowering: January to April

Pruning: end September.

Rose creeper inarguably occupies the pride of place amongst all fragrant creepers, climbers and shrubs. Roses are a favourite theme of all poets and writers because of their beauty and fragrance. They symbolize love, peace and beauty. Red Roses are synonymous with love and affection. Pink symbolizes gentle emotion, joy or gratitude. White expresses innocence and purity.

There are hundreds of species but here we are talking of a few creepers, for example, Indian Summer, Hybrid Tea, Damascus Rose, Kanya Kumari and many pink and miniature varieties. Free flowing creepers can be trained- and hence called ramblers - to climb pergolas, arbours, arches and trellises. A rose creeper is a woody

perennial with thorns on its stem. The most common colour of flowers is pink, yellow and white. The flower consists of multiple petals which have a strong aroma.

Rose petals are edible and are used for making Rose Water, Gulkand and other products for health problems. Rose hip, the fruit of the flower, has medicinal properties and is also used for making jams and jellies. Rose petals make delicious Sharbat, Thandai and other cooling drinks. They add a unique flavour in several sweet dishes like Gulab - ki- kheer, Pullao, Rabri , Sandaesh and Pedas. Essential oils extracted from rose flowers are widely used in aroma therapy and for making *attar*, perfumes and beauty aid products.

2. Echitis Creeper:

Native to India

Botanical Name – Echites Caryophyllata

Family – Apocynaceae – Plumeria and Oleander family.

Sanskrit Name: Malti Lata

Propagation: by layering in monsoon.

Flowering:

Soil: Any type of soil but requires ample watering during growing season.

Climate: Needs a warm and humid climate.

Pruning: Occasional trimming is required. Should not be allowed to climb a tree because it will finish it.

It is a fast growing, woody, evergreen climber, easy to maintain. It has highly fragrant white flowers which grow in big bunches, resembling Jasmine flowers. The flowers have five twisted petals with a spicy aroma. Flowering time is from April- August. It starts flowering even before attaining full maturity. An ideal creeper for pergolas, arches and for covering walls. Its flowers are offered to Lord Ganesha during 21 Pushpa Puja.

The creeper attracts lots of butterflies and bees.

For reasons unknown, it is not easily available and therefore not commonly seen despite its great qualities – native to India, hardy, easy to grow and maintain, an evergreen and highly fragrant flowers.

3. Passionflower (Passiflora):

Botanical name: Passiflora Foetida

Other common names: Rakhi flower, Krishna Kamal; Kaurav-Pandav

Family: Passifloraceae

Soil: It needs moist and rich soil and lot of sun.

Propagation: By layering.

Flowering season: from August to November.

A very fast growing, deciduous climber with a unique floral structure. It climbs through its tendrils. This vine produces very beautiful flowers in purple colour with a fragrance that ignites your senses but now we can get other colours also like pink, red, white and yellow. The flowers have serrated leaves, radial filaments and ten petals and are widely used as ornamentals. Its fruit, called passion fruit, is edible and is also used as a dietary supplement and in making medicines, specially herbal and homoeopathic medicines and is recommended for anxiety and insomnia. It should be used under medical guidance since it may cause drowsiness and is not recommended for pregnant women. It is a favourite of butterflies, humming birds, bees and wasps.

4. Madhu Malati/ Rangoon Creeper/ Chinese Honeysuckle.:

Botanical Name: Combretum Indicum

Family: Combretaceae

Propagation: By layering

Sun and Soil: needs a well drained soil.

Flowering: Blooming throughout summer.

Madhu Malti is easy to grow and maintain. All you need is a good, healthy sapling.²³ It is a hardy, fast growing evergreen creeper that needs lot of sun but very little water and maintenance. It can be trained to climb in any direction or surface. Its special appeal is because of its highly fragrant tubular flowers which come in bunches of three colours, changing from white on Day 1 to Pink on Day 2 to Deep red on Day 3 to attract three types of pollinators, from hawks with long tongues to bees and buzzing birds while it changes from a horizontal to drooping posture. Its heady fragrance makes it a perfect plant for summer. The flowers are for decorative vases without a string and fruit for making Chinese medicines. Seeds are used to treat roundworm and kills parasites in the digestive tract.

5. Hari Champa/Manoranjani

Family: Annonaceae

Botanical Name: Artabotrys Hexapetalus

Propagation: By layering or seeds.³⁰ degrees centigrade.

Flowering time: September/October.

Description: An evergreen, sun loving and slow growing, medium size creeper. A tropical creeper which grows up to 10-12 feet. It produces flowers, solitary or in pairs, which are in green in colour, fading to yellow with age. The name hexapetalus comes from its three inner and three outer greenish yellow petals. The flowers have a strong, fruity fragrance. The flowers are usually hidden by coarse, shiny green leaves. Once plucked, they retain fragrance for days and if kept in a room, fill the whole area with an intoxicating, fruity smell. Good for cut flowers, balconies and

screens. Primarily ornamental, its flowers are used for flavouring tea and they yield essential oils for aroma therapy and perfumes.

6. Clematis: The Queen of Vines:

Botanical Name: Clematis Gauriana

Family: Ranunculaceae

Common names: Raanjai morvel

Propagation: By layering.

Flowering time: Monsoon

Clematis is a highly decorative and spectacular vine with small light green leaves. New growth emerges in spring. It is a slow growing, perennial and semi-deciduous, flowering vine. Its flowers are white and highly fragrant. It can climb tall trees, fences and structures. Its fragrance is divine. Needs lot of sun and hard pruning after flowering. You need to be careful where the roots will be set but once established, the creeper will yield a brilliant, dazzling mass of flowers. Roots should be kept cool in summer with mulch or small flowers around them. Its leaves provide food for caterpillars and flowers are a big favourite of bees. Fortunately, its fragrance is far reaching and you can enjoy it from a distance.

7. Jasmine/Chameli:

Botanical Name: Jasminum auriculatum

Common name: Juhi

Family: Oleaceae

It needs lot of sun (6 hours). Soil should be well drained and fertile. It is a hardy deciduous/evergreen which grows moderately, about 12/24 inches every year. It is a versatile creeper and can be trained to grow as a shrub, in pots, as a ground cover but is best as a creeper. Main growing season is February-May and July-September.

Its flowers have numerous uses. It is used in venis for deities and women. Its fragrance is a special attraction for humming birds and butterflies. Because of its intense fragrance, it is used in the perfumery, specially for making *attar*, and cosmetic industry. Infusion from Jasmine flowers make delicious infusions which are very calming and cooling. Essential oil is referred to as the King of Oils, which is beneficial for anxiety and sleep, Many antiseptic and anti-inflammatory medicines are made from the essential oils of jasmine.

