

Top 10 Scented Annuals



Photo: RDA GID

Angel's trumpet

Plant tropical angels' trumpet, and you'll soon be singing its praises. These striking flowers come in a variety of forms and attract plenty of attention. They unfurl captivating, showy, bell-shaped blooms that are 6 to 12 inches long, and flower prolifically from spring to autumn. One word of caution, however. Angels' trumpets belong to the nightshade family and is highly toxic. Keep the plant away from young children and pets, and gardeners should wear gloves to prevent contact with the plant's sap.

- **Common Names:** Angels' trumpets, moonflower, datura.
- **Botanical Name:** Brugmansia.
- **Hardiness:** Annual in most areas.
- **Bloom Time:** Late spring to autumn, varies by species.
- **Size:** Typically 3 to 12 feet high and 3 to 8 feet wide.
- **Flowers:** Trumpet-shaped flowers in white, yellow, apricot, pink, and red.
- **Light Needs:** Full sun.
- **Growing Advice:** Sow seed in spring, or root cuttings in summer.
- **Prize Picks:** Betty Marshall is a favorite white. Charles Grimaldi has gorgeous golden flowers.



Photo: RDA GID

Flowering tobacco

For a no-fuss way to liven up your garden with butterflies and hummingbirds, plant flowering tobacco. This relative of the tobacco plant is also known as nicotiana. The stems rise from a rosette of leaves and are covered with star-shaped flowers in shades of pink, red, maroon, lavender, white, yellow and even green.

Many varieties produce fragrant blooms all season long on tall stems that sway in the breeze. They also make a nice backdrop when planted in clusters beyond border plants.

- **Common Names:** Flowering tobacco.
- **Botanical Name:** *Nicotiana glauca*.
- **Hardiness:** Annual.
- **Bloom Time:** Summer to first frost.
- **Size:** 10 inches to 5 feet high, 6 to 24 inches wide.
- **Flowers:** White, red, pink, lavender, green, and yellow.
- **Light Needs:** Partial shade to full sun.
- **Growing Advice:** Prefers rich, moist soil that's well-draining.
- **Prize Picks:** Nicki Red bears small fragrant red flowers. Nicki White is lovely, especially at dusk. Nicki Lime has unique, pale-green flowers.



Photo: Parkseed

Four-o'clocks

Four-o'clocks are the perfect plants for gardeners who work all day and return home to putter in the yard during the evening. As their name says, you can almost set your watch by them because they reliably burst into bloom in the late afternoon, right around 4 p.m.

The trumpet-shaped fragrant flowers stay open throughout the night, which is why some gardeners fittingly call them "beauty of the night."

- **Common Names:** Four-o'clocks, Beauty of the Night.
- **Botanical Name:** *Mirabilis jalapa*.
- **Hardiness:** Zones 10 and 11, but easily grown as annuals throughout most of North America.
- **Bloom Time:** Midsummer through fall. Blossoms open in mid-afternoon and fade before sunrise. On cloudy days, the flowers may remain open.
- **Size:** 1-1/2 to 3 feet high, 1 to 3 feet wide.
- **Flowers:** Purplish-red, yellow, pink, white, and lavender blooms, sometimes on the same plant. Some varieties have striped flowers.
- **Light Needs:** Full sun.
- **Growing Advice:** Four-o'clocks bloom by midsummer if seeds are started indoors or are sown outside in early spring. For earlier flowers and larger blooms, dig up plants and store roots in a frost-free spot until after the threat of springtime frost has passed. Four-o'clocks often reseed, so don't disturb the surrounding soil during spring cultivation.
- **Prize Picks:** Jingles produces striped flowers. Mixed-seed packets often have multicolored blooms on the same plant.



Photo: Parkseed

Heliotrope

Some say the fragrance of heliotrope reminds them of cherry pie, while others claim the blooms' scent resembles talcum powder...vanilla...cloves...or even licorice. Whatever comes to mind when you take a whiff, this colorful bedding plant certainly is one of the most aromatic annuals around. Nothing's prettier than bushy heliotropes in a container or a flower bed. Its nicely textured dark-green leaves create a perfect backdrop for eye-catching masses of tiny tubular blooms that come in a variety of hues, from light blue to rich violet lavender or white.

- **Common Names:** Heliotrope.
- **Botanical Name:** *Heliotropium arborescens*.
- **Hardiness:** Annual.
- **Bloom Time:** From summer until the first frost.
- **Size:** 12 to 24 inches high, 12 to 15 inches wide.
- **Flowers:** Clusters of tiny tubular blooms of blue, violet, lavender and white.
- **Light Needs:** Partial to full sun.
- **Growing Advice:** Place container-grown plants in the garden 2 to 3 weeks after the last frost date - when the ground and air have had enough time to warm. You can also propagate your own seeds. Sow them in moist sterile potting mix about 10 to 12 weeks before the last spring frost in your area. Barely cover the seeds with soil, then keep the soil moist and at room temperature. The seeds will germinate in about 3 weeks.
- **Prize Picks:** Marine bears 6-inch-wide clusters of deep violet-blue flowers and is the most readily available variety. Atlantis is a particularly fragrant newer one. White Lady and Alba produce lovely white blooms.



Photo: Parkseed

Moonflower vine

This enchanting vine is grown as an annual. Related to the morning glory, moonflower vine has big, trumpet-shaped bright white flowers and deep green leaves. The attractive white flowers will emerge at dusk and last until dawn. No wonder it's called the moonflower!

- **Common Names:** Moonflower vine, Belle de nuit.
- **Botanical Name:** *Ipomoea alba*.
- **Hardiness:** Annual.
- **Bloom Time:** Midsummer.
- **Size:** Up to 15 feet high.
- **Flower:** White.
- **Light Needs:** Full sun.
- **Growing Advice:** Grows slowly in cooler weather, so be patient.
- **Prize Picks:** Try Giant White, with its big 6-inch blooms and rich scent.



Photo: Parkseed

Nasturtium

This cheerful garden annual thrives on neglect. Once nasturtiums are established, they perform best when left alone, and provide vibrant color from spring through frost.

Since they flourish in poor soil, overwatering or adding fertilizer can actually diminish their beauty. They are so resilient they can withstand severe pruning - some gardeners cut back the large veined leaves for a better view of the sweet-scented blooms.

There are many varieties to choose from, with some growing in compact mounds, and others climbing to 10 feet with the support of a trellis or fence.

- **Common Name:** Nasturtium, Indian cress.
- **Botanical Name:** *Tropaeolum majus*.
- **Hardiness:** Annual in all zones.
- **Bloom Time:** Early summer until frost.
- **Size:** Climbing varieties reach 10 feet, dwarf varieties form mounds that are up to 15 inches tall; 12 to 24 inches wide.
- **Flowers:** Bright yellow, red, cream, apricot, and salmon.
- **Light needs:** Full sun.
- **Growing Advice:** Sow directly in most garden after last frost. Plant 3/4-inch deep and 8 to 12 inches apart. Thin plants as they become crowded.
- **Prize Picks:** The Alaska series has variegated leaves with creamy speckles. Whirlybird's flowers appear above its leaves and provide a brilliant display.



Photo: Parkseed

Stock

If you're in the market for something with a fragrance hard to forget, then stock is the plant for you. Some might say it has a "spicy" or clove-like scent, but the treat for the nose is only noticeable at night in some species. Bees and moths are attracted by stock's scent and vibrant color.

- **Common Names:** Stock, gillyflower.
- **Botanical Name:** Matthiola.
- **Hardiness:** Annual.
- **Bloom Time:** Late spring to summer.
- **Size:** 8 inches to 3 feet high, 8 inches to 1 foot wide.
- **Flowers:** Pastel pink, purple, or white.
- **Light Needs:** Full sun.
- **Growing Advice:** Plant and stake taller varieties in a site offering wind protection.
- **Prize Picks:** If you'd prefer a mix, try the excellent Giant Excelsior Mix. Individual colors are also readily available, such as Harmony Purple and Princess Pink.



Photo: Parkseed

Sweet alyssum

Believe it or not, this beautiful low-growing border plant covered with clusters of delicate little flowers is a member of the mustard family. Its tiny blooms are fragrant and come in white, pink and lavender hues. This annual blooms for months in full sun to partial shade, but does best in cool weather.

- **Common Names:** Sweet alyssum.
- **Botanical Name:** *Lobularia maritima*.
- **Hardiness:** Annual.
- **Bloom Time:** Spring through frost.
- **Size:** 4 to 8 inches high, 10 to 15 inches wide.
- **Flowers:** White, pink, lavender, and apricot.
- **Light Needs:** Full sun to partial shade.
- **Growing Advice:** After the heat of summer, cut it back to encourage new growth and blooms. It also works nicely in rock gardens and containers.
- **Prize Picks:** Easter Basket is a pretty pastel mix. Royal Carpet is rich purple.



Sweet Pea

This fragrant flower is easy to grow and provides a season's worth of cut flowers. In fact, sweet peas perform best if you harvest bouquets often. Like the garden peas, sweet peas prefer the cooler weather of spring and early summer, gradually declining under hot August skies.

- **Common Names:** Sweet pea.
- **Botanical Name:** *Lathyrus odoratus*.
- **Hardiness:** Annual.
- **Bloom Time:** Varies by region; spring and summer through early autumn.
- **Size:** 4 to 12 feet high.
- **Flower:** Wide variety of colors including pink, purple, salmon, blue, red and white.
- **Light Needs:** Full sun to partial shade.
- **Growing Advice:** Plant presoaked seeds 1 inch deep and 6 inches apart in garden, or start seeds indoors and transplant outside after about 6 weeks.
- **Prize Picks:** Royal Mix and Old Spice Mix are fragrant and heat tolerant. Also recommended: Captain of the Blues, which is prized for its lavender to purple flowers.



Sweet William

Each stem of a sweet William will make a complete bouquet! This beauty is a native to Europe, but has adapted to regions all over the United States. Enjoy sweet William blooms in pink, white, red, purple and sometimes even bicolors.

- **Common Names:** Sweet William.
- **Botanical Name:** *Dianthus barbatus*.
- **Hardiness:** Perennial, but performs as an annual.
- **Bloom Time:** Late spring to early summer.
- **Size:** 4 to 28 inches high, up to 12 inches wide.
- **Flowers:** Purple, red, pink, white, and sometimes bicolored.
- **Light Needs:** Full sun.
- **Growing Advice:** Plant in rich, well-draining soil and be careful not to overwater.
- **Prize Picks:** You'll love the sweet fragrance of cut flowers from the Electron Mix, which blooms in clusters of red, pink, and white. Magic Cherry has headily scented blooms of magenta and cherry.