

A Garden of Memories

Gardenias, jasmine and Matilija poppies

Have you heard of the approach to garden design as a process of re-creating the garden of your childhood? My childhood was filled with warm Southern Californian evenings of night-blooming jasmine wafting through the open windows, planted right outside our bedrooms—the scent so strong, so sweet, it was almost overpowering.

It's no surprise that today we have jasmine growing in our garden. Lots and lots of jasmine.

My favorite is star jasmine because it's evergreen and so healthy. It has never required much, except a place to ramble and climb. Pink jasmine also makes a home in our garden and is more graceful and delicate. Its pink blooms are lightly scented, and it provides a soft foil around a water feature.

Continuing with the white tropical scents are gardenias. We planted a hardy gardenia four years ago and are still waiting for it to grow into the 4-foot shrub that was described to us. However, it does eke out a few simply stunning white, creamy blooms. When picked, they have the capability to fill a whole room with their decadent scent.

But then there's the Matilija Poppy. Named for Matilija Creek in Ojai Valley between Ventura and Ojai in Southern California, Matilija Poppy is a subshrub that thrives in the warm, dry climate.

I never thought it would do well in soggy Portland. Then I saw it during a visit to an open garden. The crepe-papery white flowers hanging down with the yellow yolk in the center, looking like fried eggs, gave my Matilija Poppy away. My family would visit Matilija Canyon to escape the common summer fog

known as "June gloom" along this stretch of California coast. To the east, into the canyon, we'd rise out of the fog and hit glorious sunshine. Swimming in the creek, sunning on the hot rocks, I can still smell the Sycamore trees, butter-scotch shrubs and wet, wet creek.

The Matilija Poppy grows well in my Portland garden—so well, in fact, that I'm going to have to give it some tough love next year. Up to 7 or 8 feet tall,

and with a width of at least 6 feet, it's gotten much larger than I expected. But its glorious flowers, greeting the summer sun, remind me of the sun so warm it takes your breath away.

The best part about a Matilija Poppy in your garden? It thrives on abuse. Don't water it. Resist the urge. Let it fend on its own. Plant it where you can't reach it with the hose or irrigation. It will actually do better that way.



Matilija Poppy *Romneya coulteri* blooms look like fried eggs, but the plant sparks memories of a Southern California childhood.



Sassy Gardener
BY LEANN LOCHER

Last up on my memories of a childhood garden? Lemons and avocados and limes to be picked just steps from the kitchen door. And don't get me started on the tangerines that were pure pops of sug-

ar and flavor. Those are memories I can't re-create here in Portland, but I'm creating new ones and loving Oregon's amazing berries. I must wedge some in next year. jo

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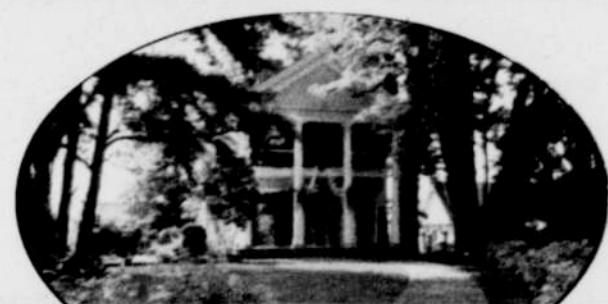
Plants-Mentioned Here

• **Star Jasmine** *Trachelospermum jasminoides*: Evergreen shrub or vine. Can be trained as either. Good places to see it in action are up the light poles around the property at McMenamins Edgefield. Full sun to partial shade, white fragrant flower blooms in early summer. Drought tolerant. Can grow to 40 feet; prune as needed.

• **Chinese evergreen jasmine** *Jasminum polyanthum*: The buds of this plant are bright pink, opening to a light pink/white bloom. Somewhat evergreen, but gets some winter damage. Grows up to 20 feet. Wonderful scent.

• **Hardy Klein's Gardenia** *Gardenia jasminoides*: Hardy to 15 degrees (down to 0 degrees with the Hardy Klein's), you can just get by in the Portland area with this one. During a cold snap it will benefit from a blanket, but it's worth it for the fragrant summer blooms. Average water, evergreen, shrub grows 6 to 8 feet.

• **Matilija Poppy** *Romneya coulteri*: A subshrub grows in dry conditions or full sun areas of the Portland garden. Spreads by rhizomes, so if you're successful, you'll have plenty to give away. Hardy to 0 degrees. Blooms early to midsummer. Evergreen blue-green foliage.



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