

One woman's delight is another woman's stink, or so it would seem when it comes to fragrance. Early on in my lesbian-identified years, I planned to attend a New Year's dance. But then I saw the flier: Office chairs would be available for those who wished to sit and dance, and it would be a scent-free environment. I did a double take at both lines. Wheeling around on office chairs didn't sound that exciting, but it was the demand that I leave my perfume at home that caught me off guard. Since that time, scent-free environments have become more common, but I still begrudge not being able to wear a dab of my favorite perfume (Fresh's Pink Jasmine is my current fav). What is wonderful to one person is not the same to others, including in the garden.

My top picks at this very moment for fragrance in the garden include jasmine, gardenia, heirloom roses, lilac, lily of the valley and a sweet, nectar-rich *Cytisus battandieri* dripping with a fruity pineapple smell. All are found in our garden, and I'm a sucker for any strangely scented plant. The 7-Up plant? Yep, I've grown it—and you know why, just from the name.

I recently did a shout out on Facebook and Twitter asking people what they thought smelled horrible, and the "winners" were lilies. References to their overpowering stench causing headaches to reminding others of funerals and dreary church services abounded.

The range of smell with lilies is broad, but there is one lily known to literally reek of rotting flesh. Commonly known as the Corpse

Your Garden Stinks!



the sassy gardener
BY LEANN LOCHER

Flower, *Amorphophallus titanum* or titan arum is a huge flowering plant with dramatic shape and color—but its scent, or stink, is most striking. Known to smell like a decomposing mammal, it attracts beetles and other pollinating insects drawn to its odor. This is one stinky lily.

I recently panicked when recognizing a scent with which many cat owners are familiar, this time in our living room. The aroma

wasn't pretty. But then I stepped out onto the front porch and discovered the scent was overwhelmingly strong outside—and not coming from indoors. The elderberry or, to be more specific, the *Sambuca nigra* was in glorious bloom. I love this plant for many reasons: It's easier and faster to grow, and its black foliage provides the perfect backdrop for a lively border filled with lime green and hot pink.



A favorite rose in my garden, **Jude the Obscure** is described as having the unusual fragrance of lemon, myrrh and peach.

What are your favorite scents in the garden? What smells can you do without in your garden? Connect with LeAnn on Facebook at facebook.com/sassygardener, Twitter at @lelonopo and join in the conversation.

But little did I know it would smell of cat pee when in full bloom.

Evidently the stench of cat pee is a common theme with plant scents. One suggestion Tweeted my way mentioned boxwood as a source of that (non)delightful scent, and juniper bushes used in many popular landscaping projects smell the same.

Cats are not the only pets to be referenced for unwanted scents from plants. A fellow Tweeter equated daisies with dog poop. While I agree that daisies don't smell good, I had never thought of them akin to the scent of dog poop.

Fortunately in our garden, we have a "wall of scent" currently in full bloom, thick with fragrant pink jasmine and climbing roses. On warm days, the fragrance carries throughout the garden, and it is reminiscent of neither cat urine, dog poop nor rotting flesh. Thank heavens. ☺

LEANN LOCHER is an OSU Extension Master Gardener and has a soft spot for growing fragrance in her North Portland garden. Reach her at sassygardener@gmail.com.

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