

# Simply Indigenous - ARTICLES

## 10. The Scented Indigenous Courtyard

Container gardening reflects our personal, creative style most profoundly and the scented indigenous courtyard is something different, always interesting, always colourful and wildlife-friendly as many scented plants attract butterflies. In order to maximize this 'celebration of the senses' year round, a combination of scented flowers and aromatic foliage is necessary. The slightly cooler courtyard enables us to use the scented flowering shrubs listed below which flower for the most part, at different times of the year and they can be complemented by some of the pelargoniums such as capitatum and graveolens. A hot, sunny courtyard is better placed to showcase the wonderful salvia family, plume bushes and more arid-loving pelargoniums.

### Scented Flowering Shrubs

Buddleja auriculata is a must for a large corner container, emitting the most glorious scent from its creamy flowers (detected up to 50m away) in late autumn and winter. White scented flowers feature strongly particularly Gardenia thunbergia, the white gardenia with its shiny crinkled-foilage and large creamy white scented flowers at Christmas and the Pavettas or bride's bushes with their sweetly scented white flowers in mid-summer (Pavetta lanceolata). The Rothmannias are neat, evergreen glossy shrubs with sweetly scented pale yellow flowers streaked maroon in mid-summer for capensis (candlewood) and sweetly scented white flowers with pale pink throats in September for globosa (September bells). No indigenous courtyard is complete without our versatile jasmine. They are easy to grow and maintain, always look good and those star white strongly sweetly scented flowers herald the arrival of Spring.

### Scented leaves

The most versatile scented leaves are undoubtedly the pelargoniums and the rose-scented capitatum and graveolens remain ever-popular. Pelargonium tomentosum, strongly mint-scented with large soft velvety leaves for semi-shade. Pelargonium abrotanifolium, fragrans (nutmeg) and denticulatum (balsam) are better suited to hot courtyards.

Salvia dolomitica, africana-lutea and the charming lanceolata have striking grayish foliage and showy flowers at almost anytime of the year including mid-winter for the golden brown africana-lutea. Salvia chameleganea is now available in a white variety and as with lanceolata, it flowers profusely. Pink dominates in the soft, aromatic shrublets – Orthosiphon labiatus, Hemizygia obermeyerae and Synclostemon densiflorus. The misty plume bush, Tetradenia riparia in full flower is simply beautiful, the pale pink (or white) flowers towards the end of winter/early spring look like snowflakes and those large strongly aromatic leaves are irresistible.

### Tips:

- Do not overfeed aromatic foliage plants. The more we feed, the more lush the foliage hence the oils produce less scent. Thus the harsher the growing conditions, the greater the scent.
- Containers for courtyards should preferably be of the same style, shape, colour and texture – it looks more elegant.
- Do not overwater pelargoniums particularly not if they are receiving some afternoon shade. Containers on hot pavers dry out very quickly, pay careful attention to watering
- Disguise the courtyard tap by planting the water-loving, strongly scented wild spearmint, Mentha longifolia in front of or under it.

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