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Digging Deep: Scents, Senses, and Aphrodisiacs

By Cynthia Brian



A cavalcade of winter color with primroses Photos
Cynthia Brian

lemon, or other citrus. Do your children need to focus more on homework? Make a sachet of grapefruit peels, eucalyptus leaves, and rosemary sprigs to promote concentration. Is indigestion bothering you after meals? Munch on peppermint leaves with your lunch. Are you having trouble sleeping at night? Pick a stem of fresh lavender, roll between your palms, and breathe in the vapors.

(A word of warning about lavender in the bedroom....lavender will help you sleep soundly but it also lowers the libido. Keep the flowers in the bathroom to sniff when insomnia hits or to toss in a warm bath to relax you.) Fill vases with aphrodisiac plants such as night blooming jasmine, rose, passionflower, citrus, or pink monkey flower to decorate the bedroom or place container plantings of these on the bedroom veranda.

Feed your sensual palate by planting fruits, vegetables, and herbs that offer a decadent dessert of sexuality. Effective aphrodisiacs include:

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| Asparagus | Mustard greens | Artichokes |
| Almonds | Strawberries | Fennel |
| Coriander | Broccoli | Raspberries |
| Tangerines | Figs | Salvia |
| Bananas | Grapes | Arugula |
| Carrots | Pumpkins | Turnips |
| Basil | Cucumbers | Pomegranate |

Coconut, pistachio nuts, ginger, and cacao are amorous fruits that you'll need to purchase at your local market. Numerous flowers are edible and contain a plethora of antioxidants to fight those free radicals and eliminate toxins in the body while giving you that loving feeling. Don't pick these from the sides of freeways, in someone else's yard, near a toxic dump, buy them from a florist or in a store. These truly need to be plucked straight from your garden. Before eating any plant that you are unfamiliar with, make sure to consult a professional who knows what is edible and what is poisonous. Sometimes only a part of the plant is edible and the rest is deadly. Be safe. A sample list of feel-good flowers are:

In the middle of every dark grey dreary winter, February, the month of love, lovers, and longing shyly signals the forthcoming rebirth of spring as sensuous jonquils stretch their stamens skyward. Amour is in the air and what better place to savor the sensuality than in the garden!

Our minds are the largest sex organs in our bodies. For an aphrodisiac to work, we have to allow positive, sensual thoughts to stimulate our senses. When we feast our eyes on beauty and inhale the luscious aroma of a familiar fragrance, we are transported to a time when romance reigned. Humans can distinguish approximately 4000 different odors. Ten thousand times more powerful than our sense of taste, our sense of smell releases a series of chemical reactions that arouse or sedate nerves, activate the immune system, or change the temperature of the body.

Want to bring more affection into your life? Take a walk in a garden where natural aromatherapy originated. If you are stressed at work, a short jaunt to visit the intensely fragrant flowers of jasmine will instantly settle your nerves. When you need a boost of confidence before an interview, presentation, or audition, inhale the peels from an orange,

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| Alliums | Columbine | Lilac | Prickly Pear Flower |
| Apricot petals | Crabapple | Marigolds | Primrose |
| Apple blossoms | Dandelions | Milkweed flowers | Redbud |
| Bean blossoms | Daylilies | Monarda | Roses |
| Begonia | Dianthus | Nasturtiums | Squash Blossoms |
| Calendula | Grape hyacinth | Pansies | Strawberry Flowers |
| Cattail | Geraniums | Passion Flower | Sunflower |
| Carnations | Gladiolus | Peach Blossoms | Thistles |
| Cherry blossoms | Hibiscus | Pear Blossoms | Violas |
| Chrysanthemums | Honeysuckles | Peonies | Violets |
| Citrus blossoms | Jasmine | Plum Blossoms | Yarrow |
| Clover | | | |

One of the season's wondrous ripe gifts is the orange. Its folk name is "love fruit" because the orange is sweet and sensuous. The orange warms your heart, restores your sense of humor, and brings out your bright side. If you are feeling depressed or sad, inhaling the peels works as a mood-elevator to restore a sunny disposition. I can attest to these statements. In the past few weeks when rain has been our constant companion, my joy was renewed every time I walked up the hill to pick a radiant navel. The luscious juice dripped down my chin as I hungrily devoured the rind, pith, and flesh. An orange offers a concentrated Vitamin C shower that pollinates my dampened spirit. Oranges are my personal elixir. I cook with them, use the leaves in teas and the flowers in salads. I create love sachets and also throw the peels in my bath water when my muscles are aching. Besides a vacation to a warm beach, what more could I ask for in February?

When you start growing your own fresh healthy food, you'll be showing your heart some love while saving trips to the grocery store. February is Heart Health month, so why not enjoy increased vitamins, flavor, and color while munching from your personal Garden of Eden.

Love is not in the air. It's growing in your backyard. Discover the joys of your organic Love Potion #9. And remember, gardening is a lot like sex. If you are having fun, you are doing it right!

"I went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in." John Muir



Lover's Arrangement of roses, tulips, and candle



Cynthia's by Japanese Maples in winter

Happy Gardening to You!

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Cynthia's Digging Deep Gardening Guide for February

It's not quite party time in our backyards. With the blitz of torrential rains, I've been reviewing architectural plans for building an ark. Better yet, I'll dig a damn.

With the soaked, soggy soil, refrain from tramping around on your lawn and groundcovers. If you haven't already pruned your roses, fruit trees, and vines, snap to it before it's too late. I pruned my specimens and gave them to garden club members who invited me to speak as well as to all my clients. It's fun to share the love.

- DREAM about spring by flipping through seed catalogues on those cold, dark days.
- CLEAN and sharpen tools to be ready for the March madness
- SPRAY your roses, fruit trees, and other deciduous trees with the final dormant spray to keep the bugs at bay.
- HOUSEPLANTS need a refresher this month. Repot with fresh potting soil, prune any dead leaves, and give a jolt of fertilizer.
- CLEAN house for the birds. Fill the feeders and provide fresh water. I found a nest when I pruned my crepe myrtle tree that was lined with Easter trimmings from last year!
- PLANT tender summer bulbs such as gladiolus, cannas, dahlia, and caladium towards the end of the month as the soil dries.
- PRUNE fuchsias and any still dormant shrubs or trees. Do not prune spring flowering specimens such as tulips, forsythia, lilac, or magnolia.
- ENJOY picking and devouring rich, ripe oranges, lemons, and limes. Make a rocket pocket with the peels of citrus for a quick pick me up of alertness.
- RELAX with a good book while you have the time. May I suggest *Be the Star You Are!*® which is filled with garden stories, tips, and humor.

www.bethestaryouare.com

- PICK a few stems from your camellia to enjoy in a floating bowl indoors.
 - ADD color to your drab landscape by planting eye-popping primrose, cyclamen, or impatiens.
 - REMEMBER our motto for the year is to Read, Plant, Grow.
- Do something every week toward that goal.

- LOVE your heart by eating healthy fresh greens, berries, and fruits combined with exercising, and thinking positively.

Where's the romance? Discover the pleasure of sensual scents for the senses to light Cupid's fire of desire with aphrodisiacs from your own personal paradise.

Happy Valentine's Day and Happy Gardening to You.





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