

Garden adds ambrosia to autumn air

By Ginny Gregory

As I stepped through the threshold into the garden, I was transported to Rocky Mount, N.C. My grandmother was explaining why ginger lilies are a plant worth the tangle. She said, "They have lots of minuses. They have more foliage than bloom. The entire plant splays open after a hard rain and they tend to be real bossy over the plants they're in bed with, but the fragrance ... Oh my, it does send mind and soul traveling. It is the sweetest, clean honey smell. Cut a few to bring inside and the whole house just floats with what I call 'the smell of the South'. They last about four weeks in a good year, take up half of the bed and then you cut them down late fall. There is a huge place in the bed where the bulbs are sleeping it off under ground. But they're worth ever minute spent in the garden tending them."

I took my Nanny Shorpe with me as Chloe (my Welsh terrier) and I started down the driveway beginning our morning ritual of walking to the power lines and back. That ginger lily smell is my grandmother. I listened to the birds, breathed in the early morning air, felt the wind on my face and thought about all of the wonderful white, fragrant flowers in the southern garden. I was amazed! There are many.

In January there is the Sweet Breath of spring ... a wild crazy shrub that sports a honeysuckle bloom and sniff on long arms way before the leaves pop out. She reaches out in the back of my border. Deciduous white azaleas are so delicate you have to bend over them to know their secret. Many white daffodils catch your nose as you are cutting for the house. The Radicans



Growing the ginger lily (*Hedychium*) in your garden may have a few drawbacks, but the bloom's heavenly floral scent makes up for it.

valley. Lily (of the valley) is particular. She establishes slowly, but finally dances across the garden once happy. I have always wished that would be my gardens' fate: the invasion of Miz Lily Valley. There are many scrumptious smelling hostas that share that same foliage to flower ratio dilemma with my Ginger lily.

Confederate Jasmine climbs my hand rail out the back door and blooms in the spring ... sweet only to be followed on the right of the back door by the Ginger lilies in the late summer ... Ginger,

the girl who started this dream. The moon vine appears late in the season to open nightly sending fragrance down the garden path with Luna moths not far behind.

In the fall the white pansy (all colors really) are so tamely, daintily sniffy. The Osmanthus is really knocking us out as we sit on the screen porch and the sasanqua camellias have a unique quality about them. My employees from the far south say, 'It smells like dirt to me.' Huh, I guess I like the smell of dirt.

As we turned on to my long gravel drive winding our way home with Chloe in tow, I wondered how in the world I could bare to lose my sense of smell. It gives me such pleasure as I walk through my garden ... as I wander this world. I am not kidding. Please stop and smell the flowers. Times a wastin'.

Happy fall gardening to you all.

Ginny Gregory is the owner and creative energy behind "Beyond The Pail...Creating Gardens and Beyond". For more information, please check www.beyondthepail.net

Gardenia starts in early spring right at the bend in the walk. Though small it is the genuine gardenia smell. It's just perfect for a bud vase when you have a guest coming to spend an overnight. The Magnolia grandifolia starts up late spring and 'Little Gem' blooms on and off from May til October. Now that is a southern smell.

The lilies have the 'Star Gazer' whose fragrance could blow you into next year it is so strong ... compared with the delicate smell of the lily of the

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