Jasmine

Jasmine is one of the first plants that comes to mind when one thinks of sweet fragrance. A single jasmine vine can perfume an entire room or garden. Not all jasmines are fragrant though, and despite its common name the fragrant Confederate or star jasmine is not a true jasmine (Jasminum) at all, but a member of the genus Trachelospermum. Both will be discussed here. Jasmine should not be confused with jessamine (Gelsemium sempervirens), our state flower. More information on Carolina jessamine is available by requesting fact sheet HGIC 1103, Carolina Jessamine.

Common White Jasmine

Common white jasmine or poet's jasmine (Jasminum officinale) is hardy throughout the Midlands but questionable in the Upstate.

Mature Height/Spread: Common jasmine grows to a height of 10 to 15 feet as a lanky, semi-vining shrub. When grown as a vine, its arching branches have to be supported on an arbor or trellis. To grow it as a shrub requires frequent pruning. The very fragrant, white flowers are up to 1 inch in diameter and they are present all summer and into fall. The rich green leaves have five to nine leaflets, each up to 2½ inches long.

Growth Rate: Common jasmine is moderately fast growing. It grows 12 to 24 inches a year.

Landscape Use: Plant jasmine near the house or near a walk so its intense fragrance can be enjoyed and so you can watch hummingbirds and butterflies come to the flowers.

Cultivation: All jasmines prefer full sun to partial shade and a warm site. They grow well in regular garden soil with moderate levels of soil fertility and moisture, and they need frequent pinching and shaping to control growth. Low-growing, shrubby kinds make good hedges. Jasmines bush out and should not be jammed together. Set them at least 8 feet apart in shrub borders. Containerized plants are best planted in the fall.

Problems: Common jasmine is relatively problem free.

Winter Jasmine

Winter jasmine (J. nudiflorum) is hardy throughout the state. It is an "old-timey" shrub often found around Victorian homes.

Mature Height/Spread: This deciduous viney shrub grows to 4 feet high when unsupported, and 7 feet wide. When trained on a trellis or wall it can grow to 15 feet tall. The slender, green stems stand out in the winter landscape. The flowers are unscented, yellow, 1 inch wide, and they appear in winter or early spring before the leaves unfold. The glossy green leaves have three leaflets.
Landscape Use: Winter jasmine is a good bank cover. It spreads by rooting where the stems touch the soil. It is also very attractive when planted above retaining walls, with the branches cascading over the side.

Problems: If plants become infested with spider mites, cut them to the ground after blooming and discard the infested plant material. Feed the crowns to stimulate new growth.

Showy Jasmine
Showy jasmine (J. floridum) is not as well known, but it is hardy through the lower Piedmont. It grows like winter jasmine, but holds most of its dark green foliage, showing off yellow, scentless, 1 inch flowers in April through June. Despite its common name, showy jasmine is grown more for its foliage than its flowers.

Other Jasminum Species
All other Jasminum species are semi-tropical vines, which are best planted in the spring after the danger of frost is past. Later plantings can be successful, if the plants are watered well until established. Indoors, jasmines need at least four hours of direct sunlight daily or 14 to 16 hours of strong artificial light. Day temperatures should be 68 to 72 °F and night temperatures 50 to 55 °F.

South African Jasmine (J. angulare): This is an evergreen vine, which is only hardy in the coastal areas. It blooms in the summer, bearing unscented white flowers in groups of three.

Spanish Jasmine (J. grandiflorum): This semi-evergreen to deciduous vine has fragrant, white flowers, which are 1½ inches in diameter.

Italian Jasmine (J. humile): Italian primrose is an evergreen shrub or vine can reach up to 20 feet and arches to make a 10-foot-wide mound. Clusters of fragrant, bright yellow flowers are present all summer.

Primrose Jasmine (J. mesnyi): Primrose jasmine is an evergreen shrub with yellow, unscented flowers, which are up to 2 inches in diameter.

Downy Jasmine (J. multiflorum) has clustered, white flowers that are not strongly scented. The stems and leaves have a downy coating, resulting in an overall gray-green effect.

Confederate Jasmine
Confederate jasmine or star jasmine (Trachelospermum jasminoides) is highly prized for its heavily scented clusters of phlox-like flowers, which bloom on twining stems in spring and summer. It is hardy in Central and Coastal South Carolina, but tender in the Piedmont.

Mature Height/Spread: When supported, this twining vine reaches up to 20 feet. Without support and with some tip-pinching, it is a spreading shrub or groundcover, 1½ to 2 feet tall and 4 to 5 feet wide. The new leaves are glossy light green and the mature leaves are a lustrous dark green, to 3 inches long. The 1-inch white flowers appear in small clusters on short side branches and they are attractive to bees.

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Intensely fragrant Confederate jasmine flowers.
Joey Williamson, ©2008 HGIC, Clemson Extension

Growth Rate: This is a moderate to fast growing plant.

Landscape Use: Outdoors, Confederate jasmine can frame porches, accent trellises or, screen fences and walls, or be used as a groundcover. Indoors, the vine will spill over the edges of hanging containers, or it can be trained on a small trellis.

Cultivation: Confederate jasmine prefers sun to partial shade. A moist but well-drained soil to which leaf mold has been added is best. Yellowish leaves indicate the need for fertilizer, which should be applied in spring. Tie the stems to a fairly heavy
support. The vine won't climb masonry. Pinch the tips to stimulate lateral growth and prune after flowering if necessary to restrain growth. If the vine is grown as a groundcover, trim the upward-twining stems. Additional plants can be propagated from stem cuttings.

Indoors, Confederate jasmine grows best in bright indirect or curtain-filtered sunlight except in winter, when they need at least four hours of direct sunlight a day. Night temperatures of 50 to 55 °F and day temperatures of 68 to 72 °F are ideal.

**Cultivars:** 'Madison' has superior hardiness and is recommended for the Upstate.

**Problems:** Confederate jasmine is relatively problem-free. Rabbits like to graze on this plant.

**Asian Star Jasmine**

Native to Japan and Korea, Asian star jasmine (T. asiaticum) is an excellent, tough, fast-growing groundcover in South Carolina. It has smaller, darker leaves and smaller, yellowish white flowers than the confederate jasmine. It is also more cold hardy than the latter.