

Plants, Chocolate & Valentines



“You are My Sun My Moon and All My Stars” EE Cummings

As February approaches and the madness of Valentines and chocolate cross many minds, may I suggest a different approach? A fanatic about chocolate I look for ways to extend its delightful scent and presence in my life. Chocolate plants are a wonderful addition for chocolate lovers everywhere. While many are not available until summer, I begin my winter ritual of wishes and designs. This practice will extend your romance and dating with your amore; creating discussion and nursery visitation and a glass of wine or two.

We have the Aztecs and the Europeans to thank for chocolate. Sometimes described as a fever, like gold. Marie Antoinette had the it and when she married Louie brought her personal chocolatier to Versailles. Known as the “Chocolate Maker to the Queen”. He mixed in an orchid bulb for strength, orange blossom to calm the nerves, or sweet almond milk to aid the digestion.

Planning your romantic garden can be a great winter activity. You can draw out containers, garden space or plants with chocolate and a glass of wine. The chocolate plants of summer carry on the romantic season. My chocolate-themed collections are in containers. I add splashes of red, pink, or white to support the theme.

Here’s a list of plants I’ve used to capture that chocolate scent. Chocolate cosmos with their wonderful blooms bopping in the sunlight and delectable fragrances waffle through the evening air. Occasionally, I winter them over, but I like the seasonal ritual of purchasing and selecting the plants. The minty and chocolate scent of the geranium, *Pelargonium* 'Chocolate Mint'. The brilliant reddish-black flower of Sweet William - *Dianthus barbatus* 'Heart Attack'. Its small blooms start in the early spring going well into summer. My other scented plant is a native North American plant called the Chocolate Flower - *Berlandiera lyrata*.

To continue your fragrant chocolate-themed garden here are some other suggestions.

- 🕸 Columbine - *Aquilegia viridiflora* 'Chocolate Soldier
- 🕸 Black Salsify - *Scorzonera hispanica*
- 🕸 Carolina Allspice - *Calycanthus floridus* - Sweetshrub
- 🕸 Chocolate Orchid - *Oncidium Sharry Baby* or *Oncidium Heaven Scent*.

Plant them with foliage plants:

- 🕸 *Hot Cocoa Rose* – *Akebia quinata* - for the colors of burgundy-red to brown undertones
- 🕸 Coleus - *Solenostemon scutellarioides* 'Dark Chocolate' and *Solenostemon scutellarioides* 'Chocolate Mint'
- 🕸 *Calluna vulgaris* 'Winter Chocolate'

Plant them with *chocolate* in the name:

- 🕸 Joe Pye Weed - *Eupatorium rugosum* 'Chocolate' – a large perennial – give it room to grow. Adds delightful structure in a summer garden and is a native plant of the American Midwest.
- 🕸 Daylily - *Hemerocallis* 'Sweet Hot Chocolate'
- 🕸 Sunflower - *Helianthus annuus* 'Chocolat' – who doesn't love sunflowers?
- 🕸 Mimosa tree - 'Summer Chocolate' - *Albizia julibrissin*
- 🕸 Viola - 'Velour Frosted Chocolate'

Chocolate plants can be found at your local nurseries or armchair buying. Below are a couple of my favorite mail-order nurseries.



“You always gain by giving love” Reese Witherspoon

Chocolate, the food, comes from the tree called *Theobroma cacao*. A tree that gives lots of love. The ultimate sweetheart gift idea is supporting efforts to preserve the tree that gives us chocolate. Supply, growing practices, disease, and other factors influence the cacao tree. This is a tree needing our support. The below links summarize this much-loved product.

- 🕸 A quick overview of Cacao and world and trade impacts – [The World of Chocolate](#)
- 🕸 Another quick overview of this tree – [About the Cacao Tree](#)
- 🕸 Sustainably discussion – an overview of the varieties of cacao trees - [Theobroma cacao, the food of the gods](#)
- 🕸 Give a [Cacao tree as a gift](#)

- 🌿 Rainforest Alliance – [Profile of Cacao Trees](#)
- 🌿 World Agroforestry – [Growing Cocoa Beans](#)

Plants and gardens provide continual learning and research. Here are some links on Chocolate plants and themed-gardens.

[Chocolate Plants](#), Cynthia W. Mueller, Galveston County Master Gardener, Texas A&M, 2008

[Start a Chocolate Garden](#), Better Homes & Gardens

[10 Gorgeous Plants That Will Make Your Garden Smell Like Chocolate](#), Garden Lover's Club

[Chocolate Scented Fragrant Flowers - Try These Chocolate Plants in the Flower Garden](#), Jamie McIntosh, The Spruce, March-2018.

[Best Chocolate Scented Flowers | Plants and Flowers That Smell Like Flower](#), Balcony Garden Web

Please plant responsibly.

References

A place to buy plants for a chocolate collection - [Mountain Valley Growers](#)

One of my favorite mail order nurseries - [Plant Delights Nursery](#)

Another mail order – I have used often – [White Flower Farm](#)

🌿 Thanks to Chocolate Kiss image (KR Candy Kiss) courtesy of [Katmi](#)

