



# introduction

AROMAS FILL MY GARDEN AND MY HOUSE. This is nothing new. I have always loved fragrance. Since I was child, I have looked forward to the first aromatic spring flowers. There were also the outrageously fragrant roses in my grandmother Irene's porcelain potpourri jar. Her clothes were scented by the sweet lavender sachets she kept in her drawers. Grandmother Janna had a ceramic jar of freshly baked cookies. I could guess which treat was in store when she opened the lid and scents of cinnamon, almonds, or lemon floated out.

I was blessed with a good nose, but also a green thumb. I certainly developed a passion for garden plants and design at a young age. My favorite haunts were the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden and the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, where aromatic plants bloomed year-round. I became fascinated with how intriguing plants from around the world were used by different cultures. This early exploration of ethnobotany evolved into university studies in art, psychology, anthropology, and history. What really paved the way for my life's work were my first botanical books—all from the 1930s. They were

Louise Beebe Wilder's *The Fragrant Garden*, Helen Fox's *Gardening with Herbs for Flavor and Fragrance*, and *A Modern Herbal*, by Maude Grieve. These are books written for a different era, but they inspired my next forty-five years of plant work as an organic gardener, herbalist, aromatherapist, and researcher.

All of this inspiration and years of gardening experience pour into my writing. In these pages I will cover some of the fascinating science and history of our olfactory sense, and the ways—subtle and not-so-subtle—that it influences virtually all aspects of our human experience. From there, we'll touch on design and cultivation ideas that will help you make the most of fragrant flora. One of the most endearing aspects of many aromatic plants is their ability to carry and impart scent and flavor long after harvest, and I will suggest ways to put those long-lasting benefits to use. Finally, I'll share some of my favorite scented plants for gardens large and small.

It is a pleasure to share my experiences with fragrance, and the stories and uses of aromatic plants with you. May it encourage you to bring more fragrance into your garden and your life.

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◀ The author enjoying a noseful of yarrow. Lavender and rosemary are nearby.

