

MESSENGER-INQUIRER



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Enjoying White Flowers in the Evening
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Busy, hectic schedules with activities and work leave little time to enjoy the flowers in the landscape, especially in late evening. The flowers I enjoy most at dusk are white. The light from the deck or even moonlight reflects from white flowers to draw attention to themselves. Luckily, white combines easily with most colors of flowers in a mixed container and in the landscape. Enjoy white flowering plants in the evening by including several annuals and perennials in the garden.

The moon vine (*Ipomoea alba*) is unique because its white blossoms begin to open in late afternoon to early evening. I enjoy counting the white flowers covering the vine on the trellis when I look out the patio door at my parents' home. The impressive white, fragrant trumpet-like flowers open 5-to 6-inches wide. I make sure to plant them where I walk by them in the evening. The flowers open for only one night, but the vine is always covered with them. The attractive heart-shaped, green leaves are 4 to 6 inches long. Plant seeds outside as soon as threat of frost has passed in the spring or start them indoors earlier to maximize the length of time flowers are produced. This tender, tropical perennial is an annual in our zone since it is killed by freezing

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temperatures. Moon vine prefers full sun and well-drained soil. It blooms in summer to late summer.

A variety of petunias (*Petunia*) are available with different characteristics and white flowers. Some cultivars perform better in pots and others in the ground. In general, petunias need full sun and well-drained soil. The white flowers of the different cultivars range from 2 to 4 inches in diameter. The height of the plant, depending on the petunia cultivar, ranges from 7 to 20 inches.

A plant that works well as a filler in hanging baskets and pots with season-long bloom is *Calibrachoa*, which is commonly known as million bells. This annual is covered with what seems like a million little petunia-like flowers that may reach over 1 inch wide. This plant is available in a wide range of colors including white and white in combination with other colors in the center. Plant height may reach 6 to 10 inches tall depending on the cultivar. It prefers to grow in well-drained soil and full sun.

Fan flower (*Scaevola* hybrid) is what I consider a tough plant that thrives in a hot, humid climate and can withstand wind. The common flower color is violet, but it is also available in white. The fan-shaped flower blooms throughout the summer. The unique bloom looks very nice in hanging baskets or window boxes.

Summer snapdragon (*Angelonia angustifolia*) prefers to grow in full sun and well-drained soil and it tolerates heat. Look for cultivars with white flowers. The 1-inch flowers are produced on spikes. The plant height ranges from 12 to 24 inches tall, depending on the cultivar.

For hot, dry growing conditions, periwinkle or vinca (*Catharanthus roseus*) is an annual available with white flowers. In addition, you can find blossoms with white petals and an eye of

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another color to coordinate with colors in other flowers. Depending on the cultivar, the flower size may reach 2 inches across. Plant height ranges from 12 to 14 inches. Periwinkle grows in full sun, prefers well-drained soil, and it can grow in containers or the ground.

Wax or fibrous-rooted begonia (*Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum*) is a popular annual used in shady locations. The flowers of wax begonia range in size from 0.75 to 2 inches across. The plant height ranges from 8 to 12 inches. The foliage color of wax begonia is available in bronze or green. White flowers are available in both leaf colors. The green-leaved begonias prefer shade and will tolerate a couple hours of morning sun. The bronze-leaved begonias will handle shade, partial shade, and full sun conditions.

Zinnias (*Zinnia*) with white flowers are available and easy to grow from seed planted directly in the garden. Look for powdery mildew resistant types. Some of the landscape zinnias have small 1- to 2-inch flowers and some are 5 to 6 inches across. This annual is great for floral arrangements.

‘PowWow White’ coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea* ‘PowWow White’) has 3- to 4-inch white flowers, with arching petals pointing to the ground, surrounding a light brown cone of seeds. This plant, including the flower stem, reaches 2 to 3 feet tall and spreads 1 to 1.5 feet wide. This perennial can be planted in full sun or partial shade in well-drained soil. Coneflowers tolerate drought conditions.

Tall phlox ‘David’ (*Phlox paniculata* ‘David’) is a perennial plant with fragrant, white flower panicles 6 to 9 inches long and 6 to 8 inches wide. The individual florets are 1 inch across. ‘David’ blooms in the summer and is fragrant. The plant grows 36 to 40 inches tall. This garden classic is mildew resistant but needs good air circulation and plenty of moisture.

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When grown in average soil, it does not need to be staked. A location with full sun and well-drained soil is best.

For more information about plants with white flowers, contact the Daviess County Cooperative Extension Service at 270-685-8480 or annette.heisdorffer@uky.edu.

Annette's Tips:

Check out our local Western Kentucky Botanical Garden, 2731 W 2nd St, Owensboro to view and enjoy different plants. Watch for different activities at the garden listed on social media. The Native Plant Demonstration Garden by the Extension Master Gardeners showcases plants for the home garden.

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