

Night Jessamine, *Queen of the Night*, *malikat al lail*

GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean, sub-tropical, tropical
Vigour	: fast growing
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out, cuttings
Maintenance	: moderate

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (2000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -9°C

SHAPE

Type	: shrub
Height	: 1.5 m-4 m
Spread	: 2 m-5 m
Foliage	: evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: pastel white, pale yellow
Size	: 2.5 cm
Period	: June - October
Smell	: scented, strong, gives freely of its scent, flower, sweet

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: berry
Fruit size	: 1 cm

This medium-sized shrub is native to the West Indies and tropical America, and grows to about 3 metres high into a round shape. Night Jessamine, or malikat al lail in Arabic, is often planted in Arriyadh's gardens and has a very pronounced sweet, heavy fragrance after sunset which attracts moths. Shrubs may be cut back hard after flowering. Shearing is possible to create hedges or any form desired. Evergreen, oval-shaped, waxy leaves are up to 20 cm long and 4 cm wide, and are sensitive to frost. Clusters of pale-cream, tubular flowers are borne from spring until October. Their appearance is inconspicuous, but they are famous for their sweet scent. Opening in the evening, the released fragrance may even be too strong for a permanent position next to seating areas. Pollinated flowers develop into whitish berries. The poisonous seeds cause vomiting and feverish symptoms, and the sap may also irritate the skin. The shrubs withstand some drought, alkaline soil and even salinity, but reduce flowering under such conditions. Heat and sun are tolerated and frequent irrigation is welcome in well-drained soil. They respond well to fertilising. Container plants do best with weekly liquid applications, while in open ground complete fertilisers should be given in early spring and again in summer. Scale and mites can occasionally infect the shrubs. Night Jessamine does well in containers, mixed borders or as poolside plants. Propagation via heel cuttings and seeds is simple and self-sowing may result in naturalisation in humid climates.

