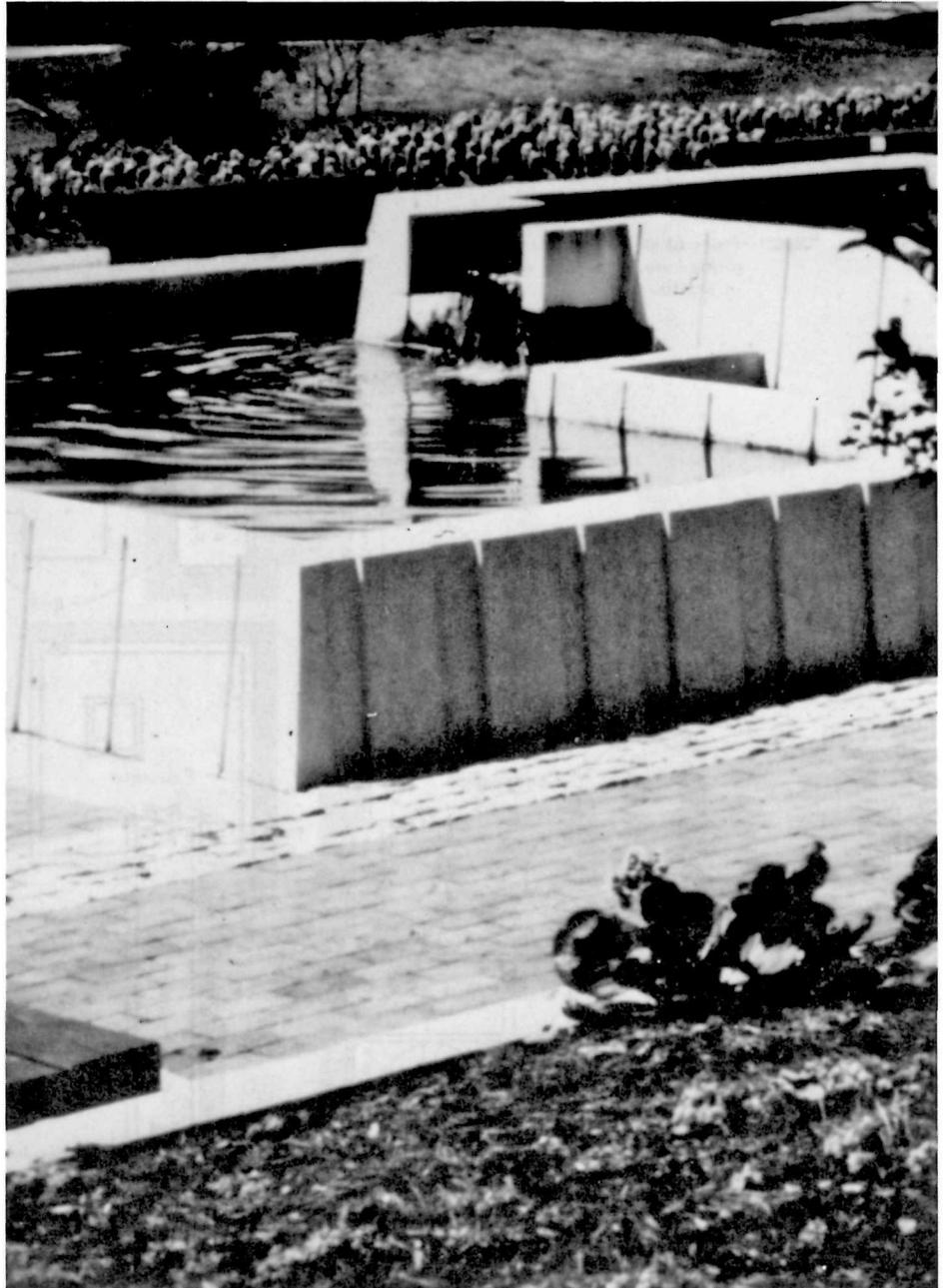


A Garden for the Senses

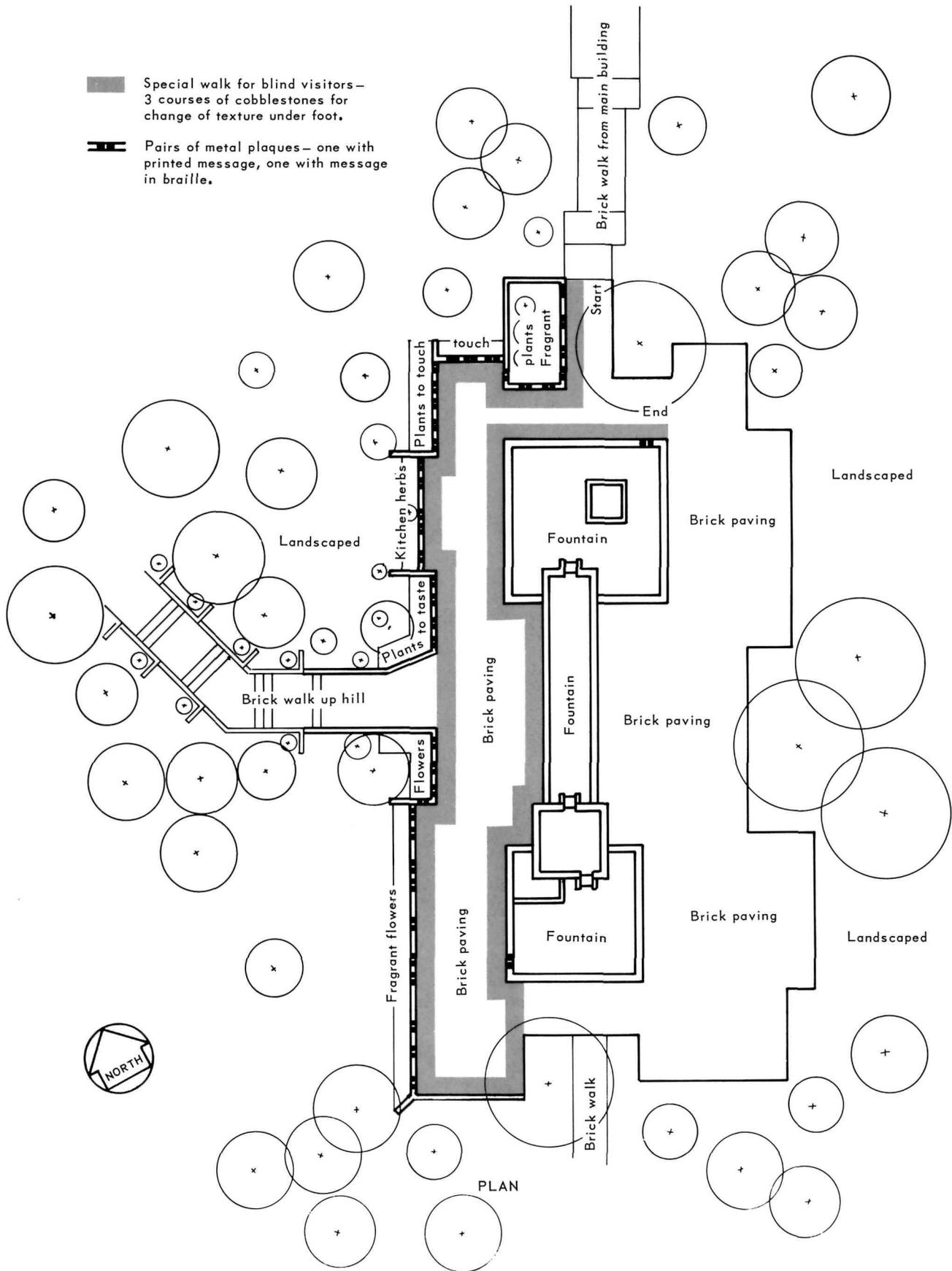


The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Fragrance Garden in Montgomery County's Wheaton Regional Park can offer many helpful tips and design pointers for parks interested in mainstreaming blind visitors in their facilities and programs. Located within Brookside Gardens, a unique 50-acre (20.0 ha) facility, the Fragrance Garden includes flowers, kitchen herbs, and plants that appeal to the senses of touch, smell, and taste. A fountain adds interesting background sound. Special path and braille signs—prepared by a blind writer—enhance experiences for the visually handicapped. Yet the garden is a delight to blind and sighted visitors alike.

National Park Service in cooperation with the National Recreation and Park Association
DESIGN . . . A publication of the Park Practice Program

A GARDEN FOR THE SENSES		Contributed by MNCPPC, Dept. of Pks., MD
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-  Special walk for blind visitors—3 courses of cobblestones for change of texture under foot.
-  Pairs of metal plaques—one with printed message, one with message in braille.



Plants to Use in Your Garden for the Senses

Gardens are not only to be looked at. They are to be experienced through all the senses.

This garden is one that emphasizes the variety of sensual pleasures that can be derived from perceiving plants that have fragrant foliage, fragrant flowers, taste and texture. As you walk through, you will note that the sound of running water in the fountain accents the overall sensual experience that is this garden.

The fragrant foliage plants in this area have aromas that are distinct, pleasant, and strong. They are thus excellent sources for perfume scents.

Fragrant flowers are beautiful to see and delightful to smell. These flowers were selected for their beauty and their fragrance.

Since so many herbs are used to flavor foods and drinks, it is no wonder that many would have succulent leaves. These are especially flavorful.

Leaves may be wrinkly, woolly, soft, spiny, smooth, or rough; flowers may be flat, ruffly, or firm to the touch. These are plants with a distinct texture.

Plants that are fragrant

LAVENDER—*Lavandula officinalis*

A member of the mint family, this European herb is found chiefly in the Mediterranean region, and yields an aromatic fragrance that is used commercially in sachets and perfumes. It may grow to a foot and a half in height, and its spikes of pale purple flowers vary in shade.

VIBURNUM—*Viburnum carlesii*

This shrub is one of a large number of viburnums in the honeysuckle family whose fragrant flowers of pale pink bloom for a short time in early spring. It can grow to five feet in height and its fruit of colorful berries ripens in the fall. The bark from several species may sometimes be used in medicine.

PARSLEY—*Petroselinum crispum*

Its fine green aromatic leaves are used to season or garnish food. Found in Europe, mostly around the Mediterranean, this herb makes good edging in a garden because of its delicate, often curling leaves.

CHIVES—*Allium schoenoprasum*

A member of the lily family, its small slender hollow leaves have a mild onion odor and are used to season salads, soups, or stews. Found in Mediterranean Eurasia, chives produce flowers of a purplish-pink hue.

ENGLISH IVY—*Hedera helix* 'Arborescens'

The English ivy shrub is fairly rare although the climbing vine form of woody stem and evergreen leaves may be found growing alongside buildings or walls. Its fragrant clustered flowers attract insects including bees, and the low bush may produce fruit of black berries. Although it is now found in North America, it originated in Europe.

ROSEMARY—*Rosmarinus officinalis*

Its aromatic leaves may be used to season meats and soups; its volatile oil may be extracted for medicines and perfumes; and this prostrate weeping form symbolizes remembrance. This evergreen herb of the mint family has clustered flowers of a pinkish hue that hang limply reminding one of pain or sorrow. It is a native of the Mediterranean region.

COSTMARY—*Chrysanthemum balsamita*

This is an herb of many small flowers and sweet-scented leaves that can grow quite large. It may be used to flavor drinks and salads, and though it was found chiefly in southern Europe, its adaptability has enabled it to spread naturally to other regions.

BLUEBEARD—*Caryopteris clandonensis*

This is a shrub of small pale gray leaves whose blue flowers bloom in late summer. This is a hybrid form representing the Dark Knight variety.

RUE—*Ruta graveolens*

This herb symbolizes regret and repentance and its bitter-tasting leaves were once used as a tonic to cure nervous headaches. An evergreen plant, its yellow flowers bloom in summer and its blue-gray foliage is of an unusual hue.

LEMON MINT—*Mentha species*

An aromatic plant with dark green leaves, the lemon mint spreads easily and must be carefully tended. Its reddish purple flowers bloom in summer and its scented leaves may be used to flavor food or as medicine. It is found in Europe and America.

CHASTE TREE—*Vitex agnus-castus*

This is a large shrub that can grow to tree-size of from ten to fifteen feet in the southern United States, while in the north, it is generally small. It has pale violet or white flowers that bloom in late summer and the plant itself is a gray downy color.

LEMON GERANIUM—*Pelargonium crispum*

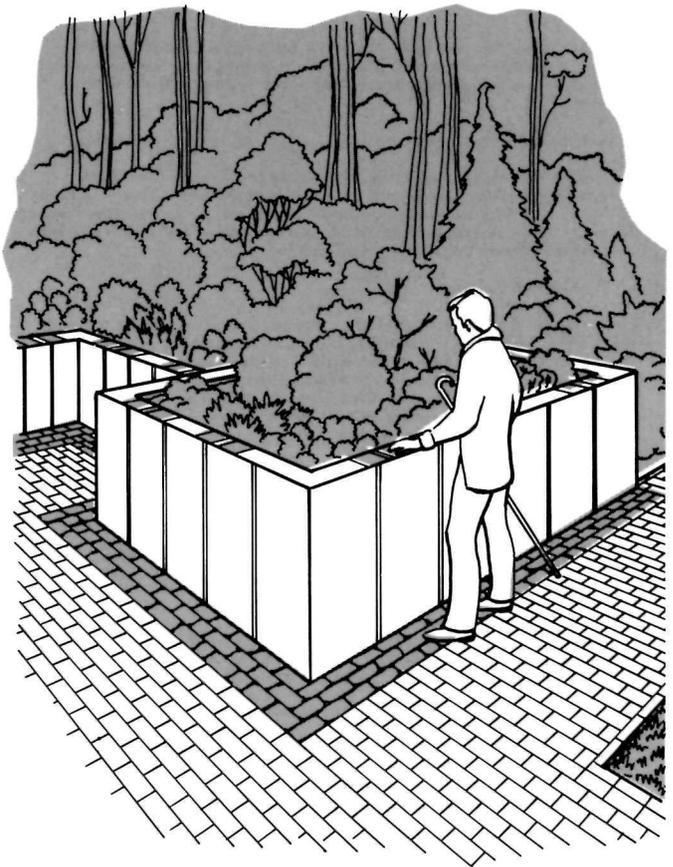
The rubbing of its scented leaves produces a strong lemony aroma. This pelargonium is an annual plant with foliage consisting of green crinkly leaves and comes originally from South Africa.

LAVENDER COTTON—*Santolina chamaecyparissus*

It is a low herb or subshrub with gray foliage and yellow white flowers that has a pleasant scent and makes good edging for gardens. It comes from the Mediterranean region.

THYME—*Thymus vulgaris*

A herb of the mint family, its fragrant leaves are used to season food. This particular plant makes fine carpeting between stones or as vegetation in a rock garden. Found in the Mediterranean area, it can have pink, white, or red flowers.



SPEARMINT—Mentha spicata

Found in Europe and North America, this herb gets its name from the appearance of the purplish flowers on its stem. It is a fragrant perennial plant used for flavoring.

BAYBERRY—Myrica pennsylvanica

A large shrub growing near the sea, the bayberry is a dull green plant with small whitish berrylike fruit whose waxy covering is used to make candles. Found in eastern North America, generally along the coast, it is a durable shrub that can stand the rigors and changing weather conditions.

CARNATION—Dianthus caryophyllus

The carnation is a popular garden or greenhouse flower of the pink family. Its many varieties grow perennially and the scented pink, red, or white flowers have narrow steel-blue leaves.

PETUNIA—Petunia x hybrida

This funnel shaped annual flowering plant comes in a variety of colors and is used for accent in gardens. Originally from South America, petunias are members of the nightshade family and bloom in summer.

VERBENA—Verbena x hybrida

These low growing half hardy perennial flowers bloom in summer and are used as bedding in gardens. Its showy red, white, or purplish spike-like or clustered flowers are widely grown for decorative purposes. They are found in Europe and America.

SUMMERSWEET—Clethra alnifolia

Found along the coastal United States, summersweet shrubs produce spike-like white or pinkish flowers in August and can grow to eight feet in height.

MARIGOLD—Calendula officinalis

These pungent-smelling plants with red, orange, or yellow flowers belong to the composite family and grow annually. Generally decorative in purpose, they serve an edible use as salad, vegetable, or broth flavoring.

Plants that have flavor

APPLE MINT—Mentha rotundifolia

Though a native European herb, apple mint has been naturalized in North America. Among the tallest of herb plants, it may grow to as high as 30 inches. Its flowers are a pinkish white in hue, and it may be used to flavor foods and drinks.

LEMON BALM—Melissa officinalis

A perennial herb in the mint family, with white or yellowish flowers, and aromatic leaves, lemon balm is used for a variety of purposes including flavoring for liquors and non-alcoholic drinks, cooking ingredients, or as a scent for perfumes and soaps. It is also used in medicines. A native of Europe and Asia, lemon balm is now found in eastern North America as well.

BASIL—Ocimum basilicum

These fragrant herbs in the mint family, are used in cooking and are common plants in any herb garden. The lettuce leaf basil is a decorative herb that may serve an ornamental purpose as well as a source for seasoning food. Common basil has a stronger odor but lacks the special attractiveness of the lettuce leaf variety. Originally from tropical Asia and Africa, these herbs are said to be good for keeping flies away. The flowers may be white or purplish in hue, and a taste of basil may remind one of pepper or clove.

HARRY LAUDER'S WALKINGSTICK—Corylus avellana 'Contorta'

Harry Lauder was a famous singer-actor who carried a bent walkingstick about with him. This twisted-looking plant with twigs that appear to be misshapen, derives its name from its resemblance to a bent cane. It makes good background decoration in a garden.

FRENCH TARRAGON—Artemisia dracunculus

This popular perennial seasoning herb, whose leaves are used to flavor a variety of foods from fish to confectioneries, is an old-world wormwood. Its thin-looking leaves give off a pleasant fragrance that is often extracted for perfume.

FRAGRANT HONEYSUCKLE—Lonicera fragrantissima

The flowers here are white though honeysuckle may come in red and yellow. When in bloom, in mid-March, these flowers give off a distinctly sweet fragrance that makes them a favorite among scented flowers. When grown, however, they need careful pruning lest they grow out of bounds.

SAGE—Salvia officinalis

Sage is colorful, fragrant, and popular as a garden herb. When dried, its leaves are used to season meats, cheeses, or dressings. A member of the Mint Family, and of Mediterranean origin, Sage blossoms may be white, purple, blue, or red and its wrinkly leaves may be either green or multicolored. Varieties may be grown for ornamentation.

BEE BALM—Monarda didyma

This is a showy aromatic herb grown primarily for ornamental purposes. Its red flowers attract insects and hummingbirds who extract nectar from the center of the cone. Flowers bloom from June to August and are found in eastern North America. Commercially, its scent may be used to mask ill smelling chemicals in perfumes.

EGYPTIAN ONION—Allium species

A mild-tasting onion with strong-scented foliage, the Egyptian onion has been grown for thousands of years. Thought to have originated in central Asia, it was used by the ancient Egyptians. It belongs to the lily family.

MARJORAM—Marjorana hortensis

This variety is called sweet marjoram and is a seasoning herb in the mint family. It may also be used in perfumes. Though it comes from Europe, it is thought to have originally come from the Orient. It is a perennial plant; it can be grown annually as well for its aromatic leaves.

Plants that are textured

WOOLLY THYME—Thymus lanicaulis

Woolly thyme is a variety of thyme that is especially suited for decoration. Its leaves have a woolly texture.

LAMB'S EAR—Stachys olympica

Its soft woolly leaves are shaped like lamb's ears and its flowers may be pink or purplish in hue. Originating in Caucasus, a province of eastern Europe, it makes a fine foliage accent because of its grayish color and large stalks of colorful flowers.

CHINESE FRINGE TREE—Chionanthus retusus

From the far Eastern nations of China, Japan, and Korea comes this plant that may grow as high as eighteen feet. It may be either evergreen or deciduous, and derives its name from its fragrant white flowers that hang in a fringe from the tree.

LIVE FOREVER—Semper vivum

Live forever is its name and it is a hardy plant growing in small leafy rosettes with thick foliage. These succulent herbs from Europe make good ground cover because of their short growth and can exist without much soil. Flowers may be greenish, yellow, or red; and Central European superstition has it that when grown on rooftops, neither lightning nor fire will harm the house.

WOOLLY YARROW—Achillea tomentosa

Woolly yarrow comes originally from Europe and Asia. This variety has small flat clusters of yellow flowers and its fern-like foliage is woolly to the touch. When the foliage is crushed, it produces an aromatic scent.

YUCCA—Yucca glauca

It grows in both North and Latin America, particularly in the eastern half of the western hemisphere. Its stiff sword-shaped leaves with upright flowering stalks of white waxy blossoms that droop, give off a pleasant scent at night.

HEARTLEAF BERGENIANA—Bergenia cordifolia

These perennial plants come from Siberia and may have pink, white, or rosy-purple flowers. Its thick small leaves resemble those of the cabbage and the plant grows best in shady spots. It blooms in early spring.

HOLLY LEAF OSMANTHUS—Osmanthus heterophyllus

In the fall, it produces blue-black berries. It can grow as high as 18 feet and comes to us from Japan. The spiny evergreen leaves are an attractive feature of this large shrub. Small fragrant flowers are followed in the fall by blue-black berries.

SILVERMOUND—Artemisia schmidtiana 'Nana'

The foliage is aromatic and pleasingly soft to the touch. Its silvery-gray short foliage makes a fine ground cover. It is grown primarily for ornamental purposes.

by Linda Teixeira for Brookside Gardens