

Fragrant Tea Olive (*Osmanthus fragrans*)

What's that fragrance perfuming the garden air? It's tea olive, the glossy-leaved shrub known by the scientific name *Osmanthus fragrans*. Commonly, you can call the plant tea olive or sweet olive, as both names nod to the sweet scent emitted by the plant's tiny white blooms. This species belongs to the genus *Osmanthus*. *Osmanthus* species are drought-tolerant, evergreen shrubs that thrive in full sun or partial shade. Their calling card is their deeply fragrant blooms, which appear in the fall and sometimes early spring. The flowers appear as tiny white blossoms, but their size belies their big floral perfume.



Plant Care: Fragrant tea olives grow best in full sun or partial shade (at least 2 hours of direct sun per day). Once established, they tolerate dry spells and do not attract deer. The leaves may be damaged by frost if the temperature drops below 10 in the winter but will regrow in the spring.

Watering: Water regularly in the first year after planting. After each thorough watering, wait until the top 3 inches of soil dry out before watering again. Soon after the first year, your Tea Olive will become drought tolerant and only need water during extended droughts.

Fertilizing: Apply a complete fertilizer in early spring such as 10-10-10, preferably one with slow-release nitrogen and follow the directions on the packaging.

References:

<https://www.southernliving.com/garden/plants/tea-olive-tree-care>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/osmanthus-fragrans/>