

Philadelphus is genus with around 60 species of mainly deciduous shrubs most with fragrant blooms reminiscent of orange blossoms hence the common name Mock Orange.

The variety described below grows very well in my garden and did not miss a beat in drought, humidity or rainy weather and its graceful branches (even when not in leaf) and gorgeous fragrance is a plant that I look forward to welcoming back year after year.



**Botanical name:** *Philadelphus coronaries* La Belle Etoile

**Common name:** Mock Orange

**Family:** Hydrangeaceae

**Origin:** East Asia, the Himalayas, south-eastern Europe, and Central and North America

**Habit:** Deciduous shrub with gracefully arching branches.

**Size:** 2-3m x 2-3m

**Flowers:** Flowering in spring to early summer, the single 4-petaled white flowers with a pale pink eye grow in loose terminal clusters at the end of the leaf stem. The blooms are sweetly fragrant similar to orange blossoms, hence the common name.

**Leaves:** Simple, light green, lance-shaped leaves that have slightly hairy undersides. The bark is beautifully peeling.

**Climate:** All climate zones except Tropical

**Soil:** Though they are very tolerant of any soil conditions they prefer moist well drained well composted soil.

**Aspect:** Full sun to partial shade or in deciduous open woodland. Planting in full sun will increase flower production

**Prune:** Prune after flowering as new blooms sprout from last year's growth. Cut back the stems above where you see an outward facing bud. Any older or wayward canes should be pruned to the ground in winter when the plant is bare. As the plant gets older you can cut back using the one-third rule, but remember this will often reduce the amount of flowers the next year.

**Propagate:** Softwood cuttings taken in summer, or hardwood cuttings taken in autumn and winter.

**Care:** Feed in autumn and spring. Don't use a nitrogen-rich fertiliser as it can stop blossom growth.

**Drought/Frost:** Tolerant

**Pests/Diseases:** Generally free from pests and diseases though aphids may be an issue.

**Cultivars:** Numerous some that are suitable for our gardens including:

*P. mexicanus* – large shrub, evergreen frost tender 4m x 2.5m with fragrant single white flowers

*P. x virginalis* cultivars include:

*P. virginalis* Minesota Snowflake;

*P. virginalis* Miniature snowflake;

*P. virginalis* Natchez

*P. beauclerk*, medium sized shrub with large white flowers a purplish eye

*P. Manteau d'hermine* – dwarf form, very compact.

*P. Coronarius aureus* - paler lime green foliage, masses of small flowers, grows well and bloom in light to medium shade