

Brilliant Blooms

By Andrea Milam

From Bermuda's sparkling turquoise waters to its blushing pink sand beaches to its bright blue sky, the island is certainly not short on colorful natural beauty. Look inland, and you'll find an even broader palette in the island's beautiful blooms.

Bermudiana

The island's national flower, a member of the lily family, is recognized by its adorable six-petaled purple flowers with cheery yellow centers, which bloom in the spring. The Bermudiana is endemic to the island and is quite hardy; in undisturbed lawns, the plant can self-seed to form meadows awash in its small purple blossoms.

Where to see it: This plant grows easily almost anywhere, and can be found in various habitats across the island, from coastal forest floors to sandy dunes.

Bermuda's native flora arrived here by air and by sea, and though the island is known for its geographic isolation, its landscape is bursting with more than 1,000 plant species, 165 of which are native, and 17 of which are found only in Bermuda.

Bermuda cedar: Endemic to Bermuda, these tall trees dominated the landscape when the island was first settled by shipwrecked English sailors in 1593. Bermuda cedar wood played a vital role in the 17th and 18th centuries, when it was used for everything from furniture to flooring to shipbuilding. In the mid-20th century, the prolific species was nearly killed off by parasites, and the island's ecology is still feeling the effects of this loss today. The Bermuda cedar's aroma is curiously sweet, and this tree flowers in March and April.

Where to see it:
Bermuda Botanical Gardens

Bermuda cave fern: Native to Bermuda, this plant boasts large fronds, which can grow up to three feet long and three feet wide. The plant's leafy lushness is quintessential fern; the Bermuda cave fern grows from the soil, preferring light shade and protection from wind and salt spray. This plant is critically endangered in Bermuda.

Where to see it: The cave fern's critically endangered status means you're unlikely to spot one during your time here, though some are found within protected areas across the island, typically in caves.

Wild Bermuda pepper: This succulent is endemic to Bermuda, and though it once thrived at several locations across the island, today it's listed as endangered due to forest clearing. Its round, thick, smooth, and waxy bright green leaves reach out from the rock crevices and cave mouths from which it grows. Efforts are underway to cultivate the plant and boost its numbers.

Where to see it: The wild Bermuda pepper is now rarely found in the wild, but you can view the plant at protected areas like the Walsingham and Paget Marsh Nature Reserves.

Oleander: As deadly as it is beautiful, this flowering shrub that's commonly used on the island as a hedge plant produces blooms in red, pink, yellow, and white and grows from 8 to 20 feet high. The flowers give off such a deliciously sweet aroma, they provided inspiration for one of the Bermuda Perfumery's original 1928 fragrances. Despite its alluring beauty and fragrance, every part of the oleander—its leaves, flowers, seeds, stems, and twigs—is poisonous, and even a small amount of leaves can take down animals as large as cows and horses.

Where to see it: Oleander is widespread across Bermuda, though it's believed that the plant is more floriferous and produces more brilliant blooms in the Somerset area.

Hibiscus: This prolific plant isn't native to Bermuda, but their large, showy blooms grow in abundance here in shades of red, orange, yellow, pink, and white with varying colored centers. Hibiscus flowers attract butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds.

Where to see it: The Bermuda Botanical Gardens features an entire garden devoted to hibiscus flowers, where butterflies dance among the more than 150 species—a truly magical sight to behold.



Bougainvillea: This climbing vine is not native to Bermuda, but its vibrantly brilliant colors are on par with the island's own natural beauty. The bougainvillea blooms throughout the year in red, coral, salmon, and purple, though the eye-catching colors come not from flowers but from modified leaves that frame the plant's actual bloom, a small, white, tubular flower.

Where to see it: Bougainvillea is prolific across the island, found in nurseries, landscaping designs, and of course, the Bermuda Botanical Gardens, which hosts a beautiful bougainvillea display each Christmas.



Bermuda Easter lily

Though not native to Bermuda, this plant plays an important role in the island's history. The distinctively flawless white Easter lily was a significant agricultural export in the late 1800s until disease halted their overseas shipment. The plant's large white trumpet-shaped flowers are popular in wedding bouquets, and each year during the Easter season, the people of Bermuda send a bouquet to the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

Where to see it: Though a few Easter lilies grow wild here and there and a handful of farms still grow the flowers on island for export, the beautiful white blooms are nowhere near as prolific as they used to be. The scent lives on in the Bermuda Perfumery's original 1928 Easter Lily Eau de Parfum.

Loquat: The only fruiting tree to make our list, these bright yellow plum-like fruits ripen in winter or spring, yielding a perfectly tart flavor. Eat them straight from the tree, or try one of the many ways Bermudians incorporate these small round fruits into local foods. Loquat jam perks up your morning toast, while the loquat-flavored Bermuda Gold liqueur can be sipped neat or added to your rum cocktail for a refreshing flavor.

Where to see it: Loquat trees are prevalent across the island, and many local restaurants feature the tart fruit on its menus throughout the winter months.



Frangipani: A tropical icon, this small deciduous tree is a thing of beauty. Its large oval symmetrical leaves evoke perfection, and the sweet smelling flowers come in various shades of white, yellow, pink, or red. The tree flowers in early summer, and the waxy blooms remain in clusters at the tips of the branches throughout the summer.

Where to see it: The frangipani is used in many gardens across the island for its appearance and aroma and its ability to provide shade, and you can see these trees at the Bermuda Botanical Gardens, which features a frangipani collection.

