



## Henderson County Master Gardeners Weekly News Article

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### A Cheerful Yellow

by Lydia Holley

For years, I hated the bright yellow blooms that are often seen in early spring. The yellow-gold color reminded me of a yield sign or a school bus. “No, thank you,” I thought. “Not in my garden.”

Now I love the look of daffodils blooming bright yellow and the color of the forsythia bush when in full bloom. I appreciate the touch of yellow on Dutch irises and have planted yellow tulips to expand the golden color scheme. What made me change my mind? The addition of a blooming Carolina jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*). Native to Texas, it is called Carolina jessamine because it has been named the state flower of South Carolina. An evergreen vine, it looks beautiful even when not in bloom.



Carolina jessamine will grow to around 20 ft tall or you can prune it to stay at a lower size. Easy to grow, Carolina jessamine will bloom in shade, but will put on a better show in full sun. It is drought tolerant, although it appreciates moist roots. It will grow in sandy soils or sticky clay.

The only bad thing about this plant is the fact that it is quite poisonous, so poisonous that research indicates you should not plant this where cattle graze. Although appreciated by native bees, the nectar is considered poisonous in large quantities to the non-native honey bees, and honey made with a very large concentration can be toxic to humans.

If you do not eat it, it is a wonderful plant. Considered deer resistant, Carolina jessamine is often planted along a fence. It will also grow up a trellis or pergola, or even up a tree, offering a cheerful start to the spring season. Put it where you can appreciate its intoxicating scent, which has often been used in perfumes.

I now love the look of bright yellow in my garden, especially in spring. That lovely golden color reminds me of a ray of sunshine or a spot of cheer. Bright and colorful, these yellow plants give a welcome wave, saying “Come, look - spring is here!” Who could not love that?

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