

## Stop 122 Kid's Tour – Scented Geraniums, Show House

Can you imagine what it would be like if every time somebody brushed up against you, your clothes gave off the smell of pineapple, lemon, peppermint or even stinky cheese? Well that's how it is for these plants! Botanists call them pelagoriums, but you might know them by their common name – scented geraniums. Small glands in the leaves and flowers of these plants produce the oils that give scented geraniums their distinctive smells. These kinds of oils give roses, pine trees and lots of other plants their great scents too!

It's a good idea not to touch the plants because sometimes the oils can irritate your skin. But go ahead and smell them all you want! Fragrant geranium oils are used in perfumes and mosquito repellants, as well as for food seasonings. Some folks even use them to treat ulcers or athlete's foot! Because it takes a lot of work and a lot of plants to get a small amount of fragrance, scientists are always studying ways to create *imitation* plant scents in a laboratory. Think about that the next time you smell a tub full of watermelon bubble bath!