A rose’s fragrance is produced by oil-based compounds of alcohols and sugars in the blossom. Like the aroma of wine, rose scents can be complex. Different varieties are described as smelling like:

- apples
- clover
- lemons
- nasturtiums
- orris root (iris root)
- violets

Other scents associated with roses include green tea leaves, cloves, raspberry, bay, spice, musk, parsley, wine, lily of the valley, linseed oil, ferns, moss, hyacinth, orange, anise, licorice, honey, marigold, banana, apricot, quince, geranium, peppers, melon, and myrrh.

These scents can be spicy, sweet, fruity, or musky. They also vary in intensity from light or mild to moderate and strong.