Among the many varieties of jasmine, Jasminum grandiflorum and Jasminum sambac are the only two to be used in making fine fragrances. Jasmine is a climbing vine renowned for the exquisite scent of its pink-tinged white flowers. When they bloom in late summer, the fields give off a characteristic sweet, flowery odor. The fragile flowers must be picked before dawn and quickly processed. They first undergo hexane extraction to obtain a concrete with a solid consistency. On average, it takes one ton of flowers to produce three kilograms of concrete. Then, an ethanolic extract of the concrete results in the ethanol-soluble absolute, with a good yield of between 50 and 65%. Thus, one ton of flowers produces between 1.5 and two kilos of absolute. Egyptian jasmine absolute is more opulent and animalic than that of Indian origin.

The word “jasmine” comes from the Arabic “yâsamin,” itself borrowed from Persian word meaning “white flower.” “Grandiflorum,” naturally, means “large flower.” Native to the valleys of the Himalayas, the plant is grown mainly in India and Egypt today. Jasminum grandiflorum was imported into Europe by the Moorish and Spanish sailors in the 16th century. In the 18th century, jasmine was the springboard for the expansion of the City of Grasse, the main growing area of the flower. Along with the rose, it became one of the symbols of Grasse. It has been used since ancient times, when the Persians scented their homes with the fragrance, while the Buddhist monks of Benares used the flowers in their refreshing eye washes and their religious ceremonies.