

Growing Vines
By
Doris Taylor, Plant Clinic Manager
June 4, 2004

Vines offer both floral and foliar interest to the home landscape. Being both functional and decorative, vines can be grown for their prolific blooms, attractive foliage, and interesting ornamental fruits and seedpods. Vines are ideal plants to provide privacy, camouflage walls, hide unsightly poles, climb over arbors and trellises, or, without support, be left to meander along the ground. When space is at a premium, vines can add interesting vertical dimensions to the landscape.

Vines are easy to grow and most require very little care; however, there are a few factors to consider before choosing a vine.

- Match the vine to its light requirements: a sun-loving vine may grow in partial shade but won't thrive or produce many flowers. Vines that require full sun are looking for at least 6 hours of direct sunlight each day. Partial shade may mean morning sun and afternoon shade or vice versa. And, full shade means no direct sunlight.
- Many vines like to have their roots cool and shaded and most vines prefer moist, well-drained soils. A 2 to 3-inch layer of organic mulch will moderate soil temperature fluctuations, keep roots cool, and conserve soil moisture. Avoid planting in windy sites.
- Consider the ultimate size and vigor of your vine, and choose the proper support.

You do not need elaborate structures to grow vines, but it's important that you pair the right plant with the right support so the vine will be properly attached and supported by the structure over time. Vines climb by tendrils, by twining, or by clinging.

- Twining vines, such as honeysuckle (*Lonicera* species) or clematis, climb by twisting their stems, leaf stalks (petioles), or tendrils around a support. Twining vines grow best on trellises, arbors, wires, or chain-link fences.
- Climbing or clinging vines, such as Boston ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*), attach directly to a surface by means of holdfasts or adhesive discs. Others, such as climbing hydrangea (*Hydrangea anomala* ssp. *petiolaris*), attach by small aerial roots. These vines work best on a rough surface, such as stone, wood, masonry walls, and tree trunks.

A word of caution: Clinging vines that attach with aerial roots and holdfasts can work their way into mortar cracks, which may require repair, or can leave clinging roots on rough surfaces after the vine has been removed.

Vine Selection

The following is a list of recommended vines that can extend your garden upward and add beauty, color, fragrance, and charm. For a comprehensive list and more information, check the Morton Arboretum website at <http://www.mortonarb.org/>, *Vines for the Home Landscape*, or purchase a hard copy at the Arboretum Store (\$2).

Vines that Cling

- Trumpet creeper (*Campsis radicans*)
- Winter creeper (*Euonymus fortunei*)
- Ivy (*Hedera* species)
- Climbing Hydrangea (*Hydrangea anomala* subsp. *petiolaris*)

- Boston ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*)
- Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)

Vines that Twine

- Hardy Kiwi (*Actinidia arguta*)
- 5-leaf Akebia (*Akebia quinata*)
- Porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis* species)
- Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia durior*)
- Perennial Sweet pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*)
- Silver lace vine (*Polygonum aubertii*)
- Magnolia vine (*Schisandra chinensis*)
- Wisteria (*Wisteria* species)
- Clematis (*Clematis* species & cultivars)
- Grapes (*Vitis* species)

Annual Vines

Annual vines grow quickly in one season and die after the first hard frost. Annual vines do not require heavy-duty support and rarely need pruning.

- Bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea* species)
- Hyacinth Bean (*Dolichos lablab*)
- Sweet Potato Vine (*Ipomoea batatas*)
- Morning Glory (*Ipomoea purpurea*)
- Winter Jasmine (*Jasminum officinale*)
- Annual Sweet pea (*Lathyrus odoratus*)
- Passion Flower (*Passiflora caerulea*)
- Black-eyed Susan Vine (*Thunbergia alata*)
- Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*)

Invasive Vines

The following vines are considered weedy and invasive and often grow out of control. They should not be considered for the home landscape:

- *Celastrus orbiculata*; Oriental bittersweet
- *Lonicera japonica*; Japanese honeysuckle
- *Menispermum canadense*; Moonseed
- *Toxicodendron radicans*; Poison ivy