



## ANNUAL VINES & CLIMBERS

Vines are among the most versatile plants in the landscape. They add height and color to bare walls and fences; they serve as narrow barriers to screen out unwanted views; they artfully weave their way among plantings and cover empty spaces, and they tumble over the sides of walls, containers or window boxes to soften harsh edges. While many perennial vines can serve these purposes, don't discount the importance of annual varieties. They have some distinct advantages over their perennial counterparts and deserve a place in every garden.

- \* Many love heat and humidity, blooming throughout the summer.
- \* Most are quite vigorous: they will fill in a trellis or garden area in a matter of weeks, not years.
- \* Many can be easily grown from seed in almost any sunny spot.
- \* Most are suitable for container culture.
- \* Many are fragrant.
- \* Many have exotic or colorful foliage and/or flowers.
- \* Many can be brought inside and over-wintered as houseplants.

Morning glories are perhaps the best known of the annual vines. These easy-to-grow beauties are available in a wide range of glorious flower colors, from the coveted true blue, to reds, purples, pinks, whites and bi-colors. Their heart-shaped green foliage is attractive, too, and once temperatures warm up, most varieties will quickly reach 8 to 10 feet. The twining vines are attractive on an arbor or trellis, and are a good choice to plant next to a Clematis vine while waiting for it to get established—the morning glories will provide quick color while lending needed shade to the Clematis' roots.



Those who work during the day may want to consider planting some moonflowers. These are similar to morning glories, but their huge white blooms open in the evening. As an added bonus, they are fragrant. Plant some near a patio or sitting area and enjoy.

Cardinal climber is another member of the morning glory family, and its brilliant red flowers attract hummingbirds to the garden. Its dissected, palm-shaped foliage is attractive and lends an exotic look to the garden.

Morning glories and their relatives can be purchased as started plants, or they can be grown from seed, but do not plant them outside until after all danger of frost is over. These plants abhor the cold and will not take off until the soil warms up. Seeds are large and easy to work with: start them inside in peat pots or plant outside directly where the plants are to grow. Seeds germinate better if nicked

with a sharp knife or soaked overnight before planting. Choose a sunny, warm spot, water, and watch them take off—these plants are not fussy about soil type and do not require a lot of extra fertilizer.

For daisy-like flowers, try planting some Thunbergia, or Black-eyed Susan Vine. These vines produce many small, cheery blossoms in warm, terra cotta shades of yellow, orange and red, all with a distinctive black eye. Vines grow 6 to 7 feet long and are suitable for trellises, arbors, hanging baskets, or window boxes. They are easy to grow from seed or as started plants in sun to part shade.



For heavenly fragrance, it is hard to beat Sweet Peas. Their lovely, delicate flowers are produced on short, climbing vines that reach about 4 to 6 feet in height, suitable for a small trellis or bamboo pyramid. Sweet peas are an attractive addition to the border when allowed to sprawl over shrubs and through perennials. Grow some near the patio and harvest flowers to arrange in vases, too—they make long-lasting cut flowers. Sweet peas prefer cooler weather, a soil enriched with organic matter, and a location in sun to dappled shade. Remove faded flowers to prolong blooming.

For a heady fragrance that conjures up images of the Old South, plant some jasmine near your patio or sitting area. Grow it on a trellis or let it tumble gracefully over the sides of a large container. In the South, these vines can grow from 6 to 20 feet long but will stay shorter here. Jasmine's delicate flowers are white to pink, and are borne over lustrous, dark green foliage throughout the summer. If you can't bear to part with your jasmine at summer's end, winter it over as a houseplant in a sunny window. Jasmine prefers a location in full sun to part shade. Water it during dry spells and feed it monthly with a low-nitrogen fertilizer. Keep plants drier over winter.

Mandevilla is a vigorous tropical vine that is native to Central and South America. It is grown for its large, showy funnel-shaped flowers, produced from summer to early autumn. Foliage is glossy and green with a bold texture, and the vines can reach 10 to 15 feet in length. 'Alice DuPont' is probably the best-known variety, with eye-catching, hot pink blossoms, but flowers may also be yellow, red or white. Mandevilla prefers moderately fertile, moist but well-drained soil and a sunny location. This vine will make a nice screen on a trellis, and if grown in a large container, it can be brought inside to overwinter in a sunny window. If space is a limiting factor, consider growing Dipladenia—it has similar, but smaller flowers, glossy, dark green foliage, and a more restrained growth habit. 'Scarlet Pimpernel' is a bright scarlet-red with contrasting yellow centers.

Some annual vines, such as sweet potato vine, are grown for their foliage rather than their flowers. 'Marguerite' is popular in mixed planters for its vigorous, showy, lime green foliage. 'Blackie' is good for contrast, with its near-black leaves. 'Tricolor' is slightly less vigorous, but features very pretty, variegated green, rosy pink and creamy white foliage. All do well in full sun to part shade in moist but well-drained, moderately fertile soil.