

TROPICAL FLOWERING VINES

Climbing seems to be an adaptation whereby plants can reach available sunlight and air movement, claim a space in the crowded tropical jungle, and place their flowers in the way of the birds and insects that pollinate them. The cultivation of vines is as old as the ancient Egyptians. From the agricultural importance of the grape vine to the beauty of Wisteria, man has long had a love affair with vines. Growing flowering vines is a great way to take advantage of the vertical spaces in your garden, or on your deck or patio. Vines are also a great way to camouflage an unattractive view or create a privacy screen.

Climbing, or scandent, plants move upward in several ways. Some vines twine (circumnutation) by coiling around whatever support they come across, clinging more tightly the higher they go (Mandevilla). Other vines attach themselves to tree trunks, brick walls, etc., by aerial roots (English Ivy). There are vines that use tendrils to tie themselves to a support (Passion Flower), and vines that grab hold by thorns (Bougainvillea) or by weaving their woody branches into other shrubs and trees (Allamanda).

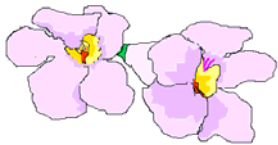
Try a few of these vines for your patio or sunroom.



BOUGAINVILLEA *Bougainvillea*--“**Crepe-paper flower**”—shrubby vine that may be completely covered in colorful papery bracts in pinks, reds, purples, golds, orange, and apricot. Needs full sun (in extreme heat, mid-day shade is preferred) and allow soil to dry to wilt between waterings. Prune regularly to control shape and size, and fertilizer with a balanced formula regularly at 1/2 strength. Watch for thorns when handling.



BLEEDING HEART VINE *Clerodendrum thomsonae*—the flower on this beautiful twining vine has a snowy-white calyx with dangling crimson petals. Prefers part sun and even moisture. Another showy variety is the *C. delectum*, “Java Glory”, with its purple and red flowers.



BLUE SKY *Thunbergia grandiflora*—a blue-flowered vine for part shade. Clusters of wide, sky-blue trumpet-shaped flowers droop over the large bright green leaves. Even moisture and good drainage are necessary. A white variety is available, as well as a dark, purplish-blue variety called “Stormy Sky Vine”.

CHALICE VINE *Solandra maxima*—sometimes called “cup of gold”, this woody vine produces huge chalice-shaped golden-yellow flowers. The flowers are coconut-scented. Part sun is best in hot, humid areas, with well-draining soil. Evenly moist during growing periods, drier when resting (usually summer into fall). Winter inside in bright location, and prune back in late winter to early spring.



CONFEDERATE JASMINE *Trachelospermum jasminoides*—also called “**Star Jasmine**”, a small-leaved vine, freely producing small white very fragrant star-like flowers. A tender perennial in our area, blooms in late spring and early summer, or more frequently if kept as a house plant. Tolerates light shade, but needs even moisture. There is also a pretty variegated variety.

CORAL VINE *Antigonon leptopus*—this dainty vine uses tendrils to climb along a fence or trellis. Light green heart-shaped leaves show off the pretty clusters of rosy- or coral-pink flowers. A fast-growing vine, it prefers full sun and even moisture. Prune in late winter if necessary.



DIPLADENIA *Mandevilla sanderi*—smaller variety of mandevilla with dark pinkish-red flowers with a yellow throat. Flowers all summer in full sun, with even moisture and regular fertilizing. Also try the deep velvety-red *D. ‘Sun Parasol Crimson Red’*.

GOLDEN TRUMPET *Allamanda cathartica*—a member of the milkweed family, this twiner/leaner needs full sun to produce its glorious deep yellow trumpet-shaped flowers. Likes moist, but well-drained soil. Should flower until fall, then can be wintered inside in a cool, sunny location. Allow the vine to rest by reducing water and fertilizer. Prune back in early spring as needed. Other cultivars include a double-flowered variety and a purple flowering variety.



MADAGASCAR JASMINE *Stephanotis floribunda*—climbing vine with thick, leathery leaves, and beautiful waxy white flowers that are intensely fragrant. Blooms in early spring. Moderately dry when actively growing, cooler and drier in winter. Dappled sun, or direct morning or late afternoon sun.

MANDEVILLA *Mandevilla x*—Summer-flowering tropical vine that produces beautiful trumpet-shaped flowers at the ends of long, fast-growing twining stems. There are many popular cultivars, including the large-flowered pink *M. x amoena* 'Alice du Pont', the white *M. braziliensis*, the pale pink *M.* 'White Delight', and the two-toned reddish *M.* 'Ruby Star'. Also try the double-flowered 'Tango Twirl' and the medium pink 'Pink Parfait'.



PASSION FLOWER *Passiflora*—a tendril-climbing vine with complex flowers in blues, white, reds, and yellow. The common name refers to parts of the flowers that are said to represent variously the crown of thorns and Christ's five wounds, as well as the three nails from the cross. *P. edulis* is grown commercially for the passion fruit. Passifloras need full sun to flower well.

PINK JASMINE *Jasminum polyanthum*—produces very fragrant white flowers from pink buds. Vigorous vine needs something to climb on. Blooms in late winter, early spring. Direct morning sun is best, or some late afternoon sun (avoid direct mid-day sun). Evenly moist, but not saturated.



QUEEN'S WREATH *Petrea volubilis*—pretty star-shaped violet to purple flowers on long racemes. Vigorous vine needs something to climb on. Full to part sun, evenly moist, but not saturated.