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Vining Plants

Selection, Installation, and Maintenance in North Texas

Vines fill a unique role in the landscape! A flowering vine in a bold position in the flowerbed is a striking vertical accent. Ivy along a shade-covered wall adds texture to boring brick. A free-standing trellis wall of vines are the fastest way to provide a narrow, space-efficient screen between you and whatever you're looking to block line of sight to - a busy street, swimming pool, or whatever your particular screening need might be. Success with any vine begins with selecting the plant most suited to your needs.

Selecting the Right Vine

Before choosing a vine, examine your proposed planting area. See whether your area receives full sun (7+ hours), partial sun, or shade. Then decide on your particular requirements for the vine - does it have to be green all year, or is it fine for the plant to lose its leaves come winter? What are your color and texture preferences? Once you have determined all of your criteria, consult the vine list below to select the most appropriate vine for your needs. Don't worry about making your vine stick to your fence, trellis, or wall - we'll go into how to make that work, next.

Installing Vines

Once you've selected your preferred vine and chosen your planting site, there are a few things still yet to do.

Support: Many of our preferred vines need staking or support to grow as we'd like them to. Along a flat wall, you can secure trellising (with spacers to allow vines to grow between the trellis and the wall, or build a free-standing trellis by installing fenceposts deeply into the ground to frame your trellis area. Secure your trellis to the posts. Make sure any free-standing trellis is anchored deeply and thoroughly into the ground as you'll be supporting a large sail area against wind. Iron fencing needs no special work, as it's essentially a great big trellis already, but wood fencing can have a trellis area strung with low visibility across it in the following manner: Get some long galvanized wood screws and galvanized wire. Screw one or two or three long wood screws into the bottom runner-board of the fence, and more on the top runner-board, making sure to leave 1 – 1 ½ inches of the screw sticking out of the wood. Wrap galvanized wire firmly around the bottom screw, and start making a pattern of up-and-down wire fanned out along the fence section you're working with. Brick walls can have this 'invisible' trellising too - just substitute concrete tap screws for the wood ones. Small concrete disks with plastic ties can be glued to your brick for a short term set of attachment points, as well.

Installation: The soil amendment for most vines is simple - the same compost and shale blend you would use for common shrubs is fine for most vines (exceptions are noted in the vine list below.) Vines will come attached to one or more support stakes in the container when you purchase them. Carefully remove the vines from the stakes and fan them out along your support structure in your planting area. Tie the vines to your support using vinyl stretch tie - one wrap around the vine stem is sufficient on each tie point. Don't wrap around the vine stem more than this or your tie won't stretch properly with the growth of your plant. Tie the vine in more places if additional support is needed.

Maintaining Vines

Most vines are fast-growing and need regular, deep watering the first season for the best growth. Feed most vines a standard 12-6-6 fertilizer, like our Covington's Tree & Shrub 12-6-6, two to three times a year for the best results. As new growth emerges, poke it into available trellis spacing to train your vine to the growth that you wish, tying ends with stretch tie if necessary. Properly maintained vines CAN grow very rapidly - some can grow as quickly as six to eight feet (or more!) in a single growing year if conditions are right.

Vines For Full Sun: Bougainvillea, crossvine, honeysuckle, pink jasmine, star jasmine, Carolina jessamine, mandevilla, passion vine, pyracantha, all vining/climbing roses, trumpet vine, wisteria, evergreen wisteria.

Vines for Partial Shade: Clematis, Boston ivy, English ivy, crossvine, Carolina jessamine, creeping fig, honeysuckle, pyracantha, trumpet vine, Virginia creeper, star jasmine, wisteria, evergreen wisteria.

Vines for Shade: Clematis, Boston ivy, English ivy, creeping fig, Virginia creeper.

List of Vines (And Other "Climbers")

Bougainvillea - Full sun. This vine is not winter hardy for our area and should be enjoyed either in a container that can be protected from the winter, or with the intention of replanting it yearly. A very fast grower, bougainvillea will go vegetative if heavily watered and fertilized and grow rampantly, but without much color. Allow bougainvillea to "suffer" a bit - the leaf tips need to droop a little before the plant is watered. It's native to a part of the world with two seasons - the hot-and-wet season, and the hot-and-dry season. It blooms in the hot-and-dry season, and will constantly rebloom if it experiences this condition. Bougainvillea bloom in red, pink, white, orange, yellow and purplish colors. Feed slow-releasing, organic fertilizers and prune back long green shoots to promote new flowering shoots. Evergreen (technically).

Clematis - Partial shade to shade. Clematis is best with full morning sun, and shade protection during the afternoon. Keep clematis strongly mulched to keep the roots cool - and plant into a bed rich with extra compost. Clematis blooms in many different shades of pink, purple, red, blue, and white, and some types have interesting bi-color and striped flowers. Blooms in late spring/early summer. Deciduous.

Clematis, Sweet Autumn - Partial shade to shade. Best, like standard clematis, when the top of the plant gets good morning or partial sun and the roots remain shaded and well mulched. Masses of small fragrant white blooms in the fall. Deciduous.

Crossvine - Full sun to partial shade. Crossvine is a well-behaved vine with a bloom similar in appearance to trumpet vine. It won't grow as aggressively as a trumpet vine, however. Blooms in orange to reddish-orange colors in late spring to summer. Evergreen.

Fig, Creeping - Partial shade to shade. Can take full sun if heavily watered and mulched. Evergreen perennial climber, clings with roots. No noticeable blooms. Evergreen.

Honeysuckle - Full sun to partial shade. Fragrant flowers on white varieties such as 'Hall's'. Other varieties bloom pink or coral. Aggressive grower. Popular with hummingbirds and butterflies. Spring blooming into early summer. Evergreen.

Ivy - English Types - Partial shade to shade. Comes in a variety of foliage shapes and sizes, 'Algerian' has a large leaf, 'Needlepoint' a smaller leaf shape. Dark green foliage, will spread well even in deeper shade areas. Evergreen.

Ivy - Boston Types - Partial shade to shade. 'Green Showers' has an extra-large leaf; plant has red fall color before the winter. Will cling to upright surfaces such as brick or wood without additional support as the plant grows. Deciduous.

Jasmine, Pink - Full sun. This plant is not winter hardy in our area, and must be grown in a container and brought in to survive the winter. Beautiful white-throated pinkish flowers, fragrant, blooms in the spring. Stunning when it's in show. Evergreen (technically).

Jasmine, Star - Full sun to partial shade. This plant is winter hardy for our area but should be sheltered from serious ice storms to avoid damage. Cold damaged plants can be trimmed back and usually recover just fine. Fragrant white blooms on a plant with dark green oval leaves. Blooms late spring into early summer. Evergreen.

Jessamine, Carolina - Full sun to partial shade. This is one of our most adaptable flowering vines. This plant absolutely covers in yellow flowers in the early to mid spring, tolerates most sun conditions, and is only moderately aggressive. Evergreen.

Mandevilla - Full sun. A tropical vine, mandevilla is not winter hardy for our area so must be replanted or brought in over the wintertime. Blooms all summer! Comes in various colors of pink, red, and white. Grows quickly and not fussy! Evergreen (technically).

Passion Vine - Full sun. Passion vine is a host plant for butterflies! They come in beautiful reds, blues, and purples with a uniquely formed flower. Passion vine is tender in our area (blues and purples have better cold tolerance but it's not reliably winter hardy), so should be well mulched and sheltered over the winter or brought in. Evergreen (technically), usually burns down to the ground or lower stems in our climate.

Pyracantha - Full sun to partial shade. Pyracantha is a great berry-producing woody plant for attracting birds! White flowers in spring are followed with brilliant red or orange berries in the fall and winter. Evergreen.

Rose, Lady Banks (vining) - Full sun. Vigorous climbing vine with small green leaves. Blooms in prolific clusters of yellow or white double flowers in the late spring. Evergreen.

Rose, Climbing Cane Types - Full sun. Must be trained to a structure - most climbing roses bloom off the second-year growth, so prune climbers only as needed. Train in arching patterns. Blooms come in most colors. Deciduous.

Trumpet Vine - Full sun to light shade. Rampant grower, self-clinging. Orange, orange-pink, or reddish-pink blooms by variety. Truly aggressive grower, covers with great speed. Deciduous.

Virginia Creeper - Partial shade to shade. Fast growing, clinging and running vine with a five-point connected leaf. A Texas native, leaves have nice red color in the fall. Deciduous.

Wisteria - Full sun to partial shade. Fast growing woody vine, pretty blue or white fragrant flowers in the early springtime before new leaf growth begins. 'Amethyst Falls' is a reblooming type, with up to two blooming periods in the summer. Deciduous. Wisteria that are too heavily watered and fertilized can go vegetative just as bougainvillea do. If this happens, root prune the plant in the winter, give the water and fertilizer a break, and it'll usually come back into bloom the next bloom period. Some of the best looking Wisteria are in areas in which they're neglected. Deciduous.

Wisteria, Evergreen - Full sun to partial shade. Wine-purple fragrant flowers in the summertime, less aggressive than normal wisteria - called a wisteria but it's a different plant species altogether. Evergreen.