

# Vines & Climbers

## Take your garden to new heights with vertical growers

Vines and other climbing plants are gaining popularity once again for good reason. These are some of the most versatile plants you'll find for the garden, and they often serve purposes that no other plants can serve.

There are climbers for sun or shade, climbers that are evergreen or deciduous, and climbers that die off every year or that come back year after year.

Which might work best in your yard? A good place to start is to consider where you could use some "vertical interest" and what the needs of that site are. Then it's a matter of matching the best climbers to that use and site.

### The many uses of climbers

Vines and other climbers are useful in a lot of landscaping situations. Here are a few to consider:

- Softening large bare walls or stockade fences.
- Screening off a neighboring property by growing climbers up trellises or latticework along a border.
- Providing shade by growing climbers up a pergola over the porch or deck.
- Covering an arbor or walkway.
- Adding color and life to deck posts, lamp posts and mailbox posts.
- Decorating deck or porch rails and vegetable-garden fencing.
- Hiding "uglies" around the yard like oil tanks, gas meters, old sheds and chain-link fences.
- Adding height and backdrop plantings to flower beds.
- Filling in bare spots in narrow beds that can't support anything other than tall, skinny plants.

Vines don't even have to grow up to give your garden a "lift." Honeysuckle, clematis, trumpet creepers, ivies and even climbing roses all make great groundcovers when left to ramble along a bank or field.

### Types of climbers

Once you know the use and site, decide on whether you want an annual or perennial climber.

Annuals grow quickly and generally bloom all summer — a key factor if color is most important to you. The down side is that frost kills off these plants, so they must be replanted each spring.

Most annual vines are easy to start from seed, and many of them also are available as transplants in our greenhouse.

Some good choices for annual vines are purple-blooming hyacinth beans; red-blooming scarlet runner beans and cardinal climbers; colorful foliage plants such as the burgundy or lime-green sweet potato vines and the silvery helichrysum; cool-season fragrant bloomers like sweet peas, and trumpet-shaped summer bloomers like morning glories and moonflowers.

Perennial and woody climbers, on the other hand, come back year after year with little maintenance other than pruning and an occasional feeding. However, these plants usually bloom only for a few weeks out of the season instead of all summer.

The chart at right lists some of the perennial and woody choices along with the conditions they prefer.

### Supporting your vines

The way your plant climbs also will help determine the kind of support you'll need.

Climbers fall into one of four groups.

Some grow up by twining or spiraling around a pole or cord. They won't grow up a wall or large structure unless you install supports small enough for the stems to wrap around.

Examples of "twiners" are wisteria, honeysuckle, akebia, American bittersweet and kiwi vines.

Some climbers support themselves by sending out little tendrils that grab onto and wrap around nearby supports. These also need cords, narrow poles or other small supports to grow up without your help.

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Tendriforming climbers include clematis, porcelain berries, trumpet vines and grapes.

Other climbers get their support by growing aerial rootlets or small suction-cup-like discs that suck onto flat surfaces. These will grow up walls and other flat surfaces without tying.

Examples of climbers that cling are climbing hydrangea, Japanese hydrangea vine, Boston and English ivies, trumpet creepers and crossvines.

A few “climbers” will grow up a little on their own but then flop over or arch down unless you tie them to a support.

Examples of climbers that need tying or “training” are climbing roses and pyracantha.

Consider an evergreen vine like English ivy or crossvine if you want to screen off an “ugly” or block a view year round.

Vines with fragrant flowers — such as honeysuckle, akebia, wisteria, sweet peas and moonflowers — are good choices along walkways or next to patios where the scent can be enjoyed.

And try interplanting two different vines on the same support for extra interest, such as day-blooming morning glories and evening-blooming moonflowers or spring-blooming clematis and summer-blooming climbing roses.

## Perennial and Woody Climbers to Try

Common & Botanical Names	Light Needs	Size	Features
Five-leafed akebia ( <i>Akebia quinata</i> )	sun/part-shade	6-10 feet	Semi-evergreen with purplish May blooms
Porcelain berry ( <i>Ampelopsis</i> )	sun	8-10 feet	Bluish berries are main attraction. Variegated version, too.
Crossvine ( <i>Bignonia capreolata</i> )	sun/shade	30-50 feet	Evergreen foliage and trumpet shaped flowers in May
Clematis	sun/part shade	varies	Tons of choices in colors, sizes and bloom times
Honeysuckle ( <i>Lonicera</i> )	sun (for best flowers)	6-10 feet	Fragrant blooms in red, pink, cream or yellow. Dwarf version grows only 2-3ft.
Climbing hydrangea ( <i>Hydrangea anomala petiolaris</i> )	sun/part shade	10-12 feet	Fragrant white bloomer with interesting bark for winter interest
Boston ivy ( <i>Parthenocissus tricuspidata</i> )	sun/shade	30-50 feet	Full, fast-growing foliage climber. Loses leaves in winter. Nice fall color.
English ivy ( <i>Hedera</i> )	shade	20 feet	Waxy green evergreen foliage. Some are variegated.
Japanese hydrangea vine ( <i>Schizophragma</i> )	sun/ shade	20 feet	White summer flowers that look like lace-cap hydrangeas
Trumpet vine ( <i>Campsis</i> )	sun/part shade	8-12 feet	Trumpet-shaped red, orange or yellow flowers
Wisteria	sun	30-50 feet	Fragrant, grape-like flower clusters in May
American bittersweet ( <i>Celastrus scandens</i> )	sun	20 feet	Yellowish-white flowers in early summer, red berries in fall