

Vines in the East Texas Garden

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Whether annual or perennial, vines offer fences, arbors and even trees a chance to shine in an otherwise drab landscape. Vines can add vertical pizzazz to corners of your garden.

Some of the annual vines are Morning Glory, Cypress, Hyacinth Bean and Moon Vine.

Morning Glory vines have been beautifying porches, sheds, and mailbox posts for years. Bright blue blooms come to mind when we think of Morning Glories, but with hybridized varieties there are many more colors available, some even striped. Older varieties will reseed, but some people have a little trouble getting Morning Glory seed to germinate. Try soaking the seed in warm water a while prior to planting.

Cypress vines make an attractive vine with fernlike foliage and the small red star shaped blooms. There is also a white-bloomed variety. Cypress vines reseed prolifically and can become a pest. If you have ever had Cypress vines you most likely still do! Cardinal vine is a better-behaved relative with heavier leaves and slightly larger flowers. It does not reseed as profusely as the Cypress vine.

Hyacinth Bean is an easy vine to grow in a sunny spot and will add color with its lavender and purple blooms and purple seedpods. Allow seedpods to ripen and dry on the vine to save seed for the next spring.

Moon Vines make a very full vine, so give them plenty of room to grow. They will reward you with large white blooms opening just before sundown each evening in late summer. When evenings begin to cool the fragrance from Moon Vine can be

intoxicating. Moon Vine can be enjoyed until frost. Allow vines to dry to collect seed. Moon Vine seeds can be difficult to germinate so soak in water and wait until the soil temperature has warmed to plant in the spring.

Perennial vines are some of the hardiest plants and can live for years without assistance from anyone. Some examples are Wisteria, Coral Vine, Cross Vine, and Sweet Autumn Clematis.

Wisteria is one of the hardiest vines grown. Who has not seen an old home site covered with lavender colored blooms on vines running rampant? Wisteria has earned the reputation of being a rogue plant with its shedding blooms, its attraction for bees, and its general messy habit. It is, however, a lovely welcome in early spring with its heavenly fragrance and beautiful lavender, pendulous blooms. A wisteria has to be controlled by pruning it severely after it blooms. A plant that will not bloom may be “root pruned”, or cutting roots with a shovel approximately 12 to 14 inches from the trunk. This will usually stimulate bloom the next year.

Coral Vine has lime green foliage and feathery pink blooms. It will die back most winters. Cut back old vines and new growth will sprout in the spring.

Cross Vine is an East Texas native, with trumpet like flowers similar to the Trumpet Vine. Cross Vine blooms in spring and the vines will literally be covered with orange trumpet shaped blooms. There are several varieties of Cross Vine available, with “Tangerine Beauty” the most popular.

Sweet Autumn Clematis is one of the few clematis that grows well in the south. It blooms in the late summer to early fall on the summer's growth of with hundreds of inch white blooms of four petals each. These lacy flowers form clusters that draw bees

and butterflies for several weeks. This vine blooms better if it is cut back to the ground in early spring and allowed to climb during the summer. It will make an ideal vine for arbors. You will love this one!

There are many more vines available to the gardener. I have mentioned only a few. Vines are fun to grow, so pick one and experiment!