

Vines & Climbers For Your Garden



G. Edwin Varner

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Written by G. Edwin Varner.

Preface

This guide helps you learn and discover beautiful vines and climbing plants for your flower garden. Many provide outstanding color, including some with delightful fragrances, for your garden. This ebook is not the definitive listing of all these types of plants.

The information on each plant may contain inaccuracies about their histories, growing conditions, and hardiness. Each plant has its USDA hardiness zones, best growth conditions, and my recommended varieties to find and grow. Please be aware these plants may not be available, discontinued or replaced for better varieties by nurseries.

The following plants use their Latin name first then by a common name or names.

The digital photos are of the flowers at my home, public gardens, many nurseries within my area, and by Creative Commons (CC0) licensed images.

CC0 Cover Photo: *Gloriosa superba* 'Rothschildiana' courtesy of Pixabay.com

Introduction

Lift your head and admire the flowers!

Presented in this ebook are garden plants having beautiful (and sometimes fragrant) flowers that grow in and above your flower garden. No matter the method of how these plants climb, such as by long stems or twining tendrils, they need another structure for support such as shrubs, small trees, fences, trellises, or pergolas.

Many of our favorite vines and climbers are annuals for most gardens. Many can grow in patio containers including hanging baskets. Some climb too fast and furious and considered invasive or weedy in many parts of the world. This ebook discusses which vines to avoid growing and those you should plant in your garden or containers for summer enjoyment.

It's time to add vertical pleasure to your flower garden. This ebook will guide you into growing beautiful vines and climbing flowering plants in a spare area of your flower garden. You may have limited space, but, there is plenty of airspace above. The sky may be the limit, but your enjoyment will be limitless!

To find plants or seeds of the following species and varieties, please visit your nearby larger garden centers or search online to find specialty nurseries that grow and sell them.

Akebia – Five-Leaf Chocolate Vine

Akebia quinata



Photo courtesy of Morguefile.com

Charlie and the chocolate vine.

Indigenous to central China, North and South Korea, and Japan is this popular and much sought after vigorous woody vine. Introduced into the United States in 1845 by Robert Fortune (and he would not be so fortunate to do so today by Customs officials,) it became an instant horticultural – “I’ve got to grow this plant” – sensation.

Not long afterward, these vines grew in gardens everywhere including those in Europe and Australia. In the United States, it has become naturalized, so much so that in many areas (especially in eastern and

southern states) it has grown invasive. Not over-the-top invasiveness but can become a nuisance.

The vines are hardy from zones 5 to 9 (possibly zone 4 but only well protected from north winds) and require a well-drained, moisture retentive and loamy, fertile soil. They also prefer partial shade but succeeds well in full sun.

Its name refers to the number of leaf-lobes or leaflets and for the color and fragrance of the flowers. A few people believe they have a chocolate or vanilla aroma.

The flowers are one inch wide and are reddish-brown, and bloom in mid-spring to mid-summer. It is a fast-growing plant excellent for covering arbors, pergolas, trellises, and fences. Gardeners can also allow it to grow along the ground, but I feel the vines look best growing upward.

Most Akebia plants are monoecious – meaning, they have separate male and female plants – but this species has both genders on the same flower. Well, that helps save time in plant courtship. The fruits that develop during the summer are purple-violet, flattened sausage-like pods, two to four inches long and ripen in late Summer to early Fall. The whitish pulp is edible, but I have never eaten one to describe the flavor.

Allamanda – Golden Trumpets

Allamanda cathartica



This is much better than the blare of brass trumpets.

You may, by good fortune, obtain this shrub-vine in larger garden centers and nurseries. Native to Brazil, and found throughout Central and tropical South America, it has other familiar names such as Common Trumpet Vine, Yellow Allamanda, and Canario Amarillo (Yellow Canary). Being a tropical plant, its hardiness is from zones 10 to 11. The plant is a quick grower sporting gorgeous deep yellow trumpet-shaped blossoms.

In the strictest sense, it's not a real vine, but a rambler, producing long stems getting support from other shrubs and trees. These stems have

the potential to rise to 20 feet tall (yes, in the tropics) but, when grown in a large container, they will grow to a more manageable height if supported by a trellis. Keep them clipped back to manage their size better.

Place this plant in as much sunlight and fertile soil as possible to obtain greatest blooming. The blossoms attract hummingbirds so place the plant where you can enjoy them.

Ampelaster – Climbing Carolina Aster

Ampelaster carolinianus or Aster carolinianus



Climbing with a little help from my friends.

Wait one moment. A climbing Aster? Yes, you read that correctly. This unusual Aster is the botanical equivalent of Superman; for it climbs and, if given enough time, will leap tall buildings in a single bound. No, not really – on all counts. This late fall blooming Aster does not climb nor is it a vine. It produces long, woody stems that weave in among shrubs, tall perennials, fences or other forms of support.

You can refer to it as a rambler, or a wanderer, just like some of our climbing roses. It cannot wrap around objects like a vine, but it grows-like-mad during the summer having help standing up by its botanical

neighbors. During the summer, it rambles up here-and-there among its neighboring perennials and shrubs, happy and carefree (supposing plants can express emotions.) Like all Asters, it would love as much sunshine and fertile soil as possible.

Then, in the late fall, it blooms producing a mass of bluish-lavender flowers highlighted by yellow stamens. The blossoms have a sweet, honey fragrance. I was skeptical at first, but did detect a tart, wild honey scent. It is not overpowering, but it is very noticeable, and surprising, coming from an Aster.

It is a native of the Southeastern areas of the United States. If Superman's weakness is Kryptonite, then this Aster's weakness is with cold temperatures. It is only hardy from zones 7 to 10. In lesser zones, it will die back to the ground resulting in a loss of heavy blooming later in the fall. For colder zone gardeners, I recommend growing this rare treasure in containers, supporting its stems with bamboo or a simple trellis. Keep it growing outside until the threat of a killing frost. Then bring the pot indoors to enjoy the fragrant blossoms. After blooming, keep it in a cool, dark basement to rest until spring.

Due to a recent naming revision of the Aster family, the Climbing Aster has a new genus called Ampelaster. Don't lose sleep over this but it can become confusing. I still like naming all Asters – as Asters.

Antigonon – Coral Vine

Antigonon leptopus



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It's a matter of perspective.

For most gardens, this is an annual, herbaceous vine, hardy only to zones 8 and higher. Native to Mexico and Central America, it has the standard names of Coral Vine, Mexican Creeper, Love Vine, and a few others depending on what tropical country or region it grows in.

This vine, loaded with vivid pink or white blossoms from spring to fall, can ramble here-there-everywhere and potentially grows upward to 40 feet or more in height. Whoa, Nelly! That's in the nose-bleed seating

section. If that is not impressive for you, how about knowing it can form large underground tubers and tremendous numbers of edible seeds.

Just in case the top portion of the vines die (like by frost or a machete) you can rest easy that it can regrow from the tuber and by plenty of seedlings. Please understand, this excessive growth happens in prime real estate tropical areas for this vine. In most northern gardens – relax, it will not grow wild and crazy.

These vines provide quick cover for fences and trellises but can become a spreading groundcover. Please – allow them to grow upward; you don't want to stumble and trip over them. The plant thrives best (maybe too well) in warmer locations, but you can get some beautiful results when grown as an annual in colder areas.

Is this a dangerous invasive plant? Compared to other problem plants it can be tame but, depending on warm environments, can be troublesome. But, this vine may be a “good” troublesome plant, for the seeds, and those big tubers are valuable food for people living in poor, tropical countries, and on Pacific islands. The seeds and the big tubers are rich in protein, minerals, and vitamins. For well-nourished and overweight nations, this vine is a nuisance; in poverty locations, it is a godsend.

For those gardeners just wanting an annual vine that can grow well in containers, this plant is ideal. For additional interest, butterflies love to visit the flowers in significant numbers.

Aristolochia – Dutchman's Pipe Vine, Calico Flower, Pelican Flower

**Aristolochia gigantea, Aristolochia littoralis or
Aristolochia elegans**



You might be better off to use the services of an OB-GYN.

This vine has hundreds of species scattered around the world, but they all have a similar flower structure. They differ in size and color, but they resemble meerschaum pipes. “What’s that?” you are asking? They are large smoking pipes once famous in the Netherlands and throughout Europe.

Our imagination can go further in explaining the flower appearance. The old Latin name of this vine roughly translates to “the best way to have childbirth.” Wait one minute. Weird-looking smoking pipes and birthing babies? Yes, go figure!

The flower structure also ‘somewhat’ resembles a human fetus in a womb and ancient people would extract juices from the flowers to help deliver babies pain-free. If you want to become a do-it-yourself midwife, don’t try this method. The reason is, the fluid and extracts are toxic. How mothers, and I would also assume babies, lived after being administered this “brew” is mindboggling.

Most species of this vine originate in tropical areas of Central and South America. Once discovered by European explorers (and exploiters) these vines spread elsewhere in warmer regions of the world. Later, hybridization would create new and even more weird and exotic forms.

They are hardy from zones 9 and above. They grow best in full to partial sunlight, fertile, moist and well-drained soils. Under the best conditions, they can grow to well over 20 feet tall. Even in temperate areas of the world, gardeners can grow them as annuals with good growth and plenty of blossoms.

The vines (like all others) can cover trellises, fences, arbors, posts and any other tall supporting structure. They can grow well in containers (with support) and rise to about eight feet tall. The dark green leaves are heart-shaped and display the annoying habit of hiding the flowers – part of the time, at least.

Depending on the species, the flowers vary from small, yellowish-green to large, deep brown-purple with white or yellowish veins. The color resembles a slab of meat left out in the hot sun. The blossom also has a noticeable “rotten meat” or carrion-corpse aroma. Guess what pollinates these flowers? Flies. This vine fools them into thinking they are about to enjoy a rotten meat feast and a great place to lay their eggs. Sorry flies, it will not happen. Anyway, flowering continues for most of the summer until the coolness of Fall.

These are fantastic vines to grow and to admire for any garden. Don't worry about my description of rotting meat and flies. You will notice none of this – unless you stick your nose deep inside the flowers.

Bougainvillea

Bougainvillea glabra



***The Love Boat* promises something for everyone...**

I am reluctant in adding this colorful and fascinating vine to this ebook. Most gardeners cannot possibly grow it without living in zones 9 and higher, or, having a large greenhouse or conservatory. It grows best on strong supporting structures such as trellises and arbors or clipped back to form a large shrub.

What appears as flowers are colorful paper-like husks called bracts. They surround the actual small flowers. The vines sport some nasty thorns but so do other plants, such as roses. One other fact about this vine is it belongs in the same family as the common Four O'clock

annuals (*Mirabilis*). Well, I find that fact surprising, even if you, perhaps, don't. I get excited over these strange plant relationships. I'll try to contain my effervescent giddiness. There, I'm fine now.

This vine needs to grow as an annual in a large container, especially in colder locations. It would be a waste of money to plant it outdoors for an early frost will kill it. To see it in its full blooming glory, go to a conservatory or a large garden center.

For you warm climate gardeners, chances are you or your neighbor is growing it. So, why should I describe it? You can go outside to admire it; few people throughout the world can. Lucky you!

On an interesting historical side note, recorded in 1768, a botanist named Philibert Commerçon booked passage on French Naval ships under the command of Admiral Louis Antoine de Bougainville. It was an around-the-world tropical plant collecting cruise, without shuffleboard and an all-you-can-eat buffet. One ship turned out to be something like *The Love Boat* for also onboard was Philibert's sexy girlfriend-botanist named Jeanne Baré. She was also his nurse and personal secretary. Naval vessels strictly forbade women on voyages, so Jeanne dressed as a sailor man to join Philibert. They secured special private onboard accommodations which caused the Captain and crew to question "What the hell is going on here?"

No one knew about their romantic relationship until, while visiting Tahiti, their secret became known. It was the Tahitians who shouted, "Hey, you fools, don't you know a woman when you see one?" Well, they said something similar much to the sailors' chagrin. Because of this important voyage, Admiral Bougainville let the whole incident slide – much to the relief of Philibert and Jeanne – and did not report about this fiasco until much later back home in France.

Discovered and collected in South America (specifically, Brazil) by Jeanne, this vine became popular in Europe and named in honor of Admiral Bougainville. Just in case you ever appear on the TV game show "*Jeopardy!*", Ms. Baré is the first woman to sail around the world – even if dressed in a clever disguise.

Campsis – Trumpet Vine

Campsis radicans



At 30 feet, you can toot your horn all you want.

If you were to design a flowering vine that commands (or, should I rephrase that as “demands”) attention, this one is a standout. Early 17th century English colonists arriving in Virginia, USA had an ‘eyes-wide-open’ look when first viewing and admiring this vine in full bloom. Impressed, they shipped seeds and plants back to England.

What is so special about this vine? It is woody, full-bodied, excels in rapid growth and sports large, thick-petaled, reddish-orange to deep yellow flowers. They are semi-tubular with flaring ends resembling a

horn like a trumpet. For an even greater impression, the blossoms are in clusters and hang down from the expansive vines.

This temperate vine is native to the eastern and southern regions of the United States. Plants can extend their influence north even into New England and southeastern Canada. Listed as hardy from zones 5 to 9, they can squeak by in zone 4 in more protected areas.

Blooming occurs for about two months beginning in late spring. This vine became a must-have, brag-about garden icon. The flowers also attract the Hummingbirds by the hundreds. Not really, but they love the just-right-fit flowers to sip nectar.

As usual, there is a downside to growing this vine with the potential to become invasive. The plant sports many tendrils that wrap around other shrubs and trees. Recorded specimens reaching over 30 feet tall in warmer areas of the country is common. When raised in a fertile garden, the tendrils grow hog-wild. It thrives outside woodlands, fence rows, neglected farm fields, and open urban areas. Vigorous new shoots arise from the roots – some, several feet away from the main stem – and all those flowers form a multitude of seeds.

I experienced this invasiveness in a small but limited way. One year, I planted a potted vine near a trellis. Two years later I ripped it out. Two months later, up-sprouted several new vines several feet away from its original position. A year later, smaller vines re-sprouted. So, take my cue and be careful where, and if, you plant this colorful and vigorous vine.

Cardiospermum – Love-in-a-Puff

Cardiospermum halicacabum



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The hidden love of anything puffy.

The other name, but not as cute, is Balloon Vine and grows in many tropical and subtropical locations. Recorded as being discovered or first-grown in the early 19th-century, there is some confusion of its original home – possibly from Mexico to Central and South America but also found in equatorial Africa and parts of India.

The tiny white blossoms are insignificant, but their seed “capsules” are the main attraction. They are puffy, air-inflated, paper-like coverings similar to the fruit of Tomatillos. These inflated, green changing to

brown (when ripe) balloons dangle from the extensive vines. What's this love business have to do with this vine? Look at the seeds!



They are small, round, black, but have the unmistakable shape or imprint of a white heart. This shape corresponds to where each of the three seeds was attached to the vine. The Genus botanical name, '*Cardiospermum*' translates (from Latin) as 'cardio' meaning heart and '*spermum*' meaning seed or seed-related.

No wonder this vine became famous for the affairs of the heart. During and after the reign of Queen Victoria, a popular method of subtle communication from the Middle East used "The Language of Flowers." Many flowers have different behavioral meanings associated with emotions, ideas, and attitudes. All of this secretive, hidden meanings became associated with flowers. Love-in-a-Puff represented "hidden love" – yes, from the concealed heart-shape seeds inside the balloon.

Gee, I wonder what the Skunk Cabbage flowers represent? Okay, best we not know.

Hardy from zones 9 to 11, the plant loves to grow in sunny, fertile areas, weaving its thin vines through other shrubs, trellises, and additional support. As usual, all this weaving and climbing can become invasive. The vines can become way too weedy to smother other plants and weigh them down to collapsing. And this has happened in many subtropical areas where the vine has escaped out of its natural growing areas. Talk about an 'achy-breaky' heart!

Gardeners can take heart for this vine is raised as an annual and does not spread with such wild abandonment. It may prove challenging to find, but try getting seeds from companies that sell rare seeds.

Celastrus – American Bittersweet Vine

Celastrus scandens



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It takes two to tango.

Colonists immigrating to the eastern areas of the United States thought this lovely fruited vine resembled the fruits of a common, but poisonous, Nightshade plant called Bittersweet.

This woody vine, hardy from zones 3 to 8, grows in the periphery of hardwood forests where it can get sunlight to light shade, fertile but dry-ish soil, and twine around nearby shrubs and small trees. It can grow very tall but, in the wild, it will also grow in width.

The highlight of this vine is not the small flowers but the beautiful fruit appearing in the late fall and into the early winter. They are bright red surrounded by a yellow or an orange "peel" when ripe. Due to their beauty, floral decorators will clip the vines to add to arrangements. My one aunt once did this, and it made a beautiful centerpiece for Thanksgiving dinner. She always warned us not to eat the berries though.

One major problem in growing this vine is the sexes are separate. Each plant has either separate male or female flowers. When grown from seed you and flower nurseries cannot tell the sex of the plants. So, that is the reason you may not find these vines in any garden center. If you were to see a fruiting vine, you would also need to find a male plant to, well... make baby vines. Sorry for the sad truth about growing this plant for your garden.

Clematis

Clematis hybrida and paniculata



This is what happens to Buttercups on steroids.

In deciding what colorful garden vines to grow, many people will always choose these beauties. Did you know Clematis is a member of the Buttercup family? It's true! Consider them as climbing buttercups.

Train these vines on a trellis, pergola posts, fences and, for a more naturistic approach, on other shrubs such as roses. They are floriferous and beautiful from spring to fall depending on the species and varieties.

Clematis has small, white-flowered species which bloom in the late spring and fall to the colorful summer blooming, dinner-plate-sized varieties. Most named varieties fall in between these sizes, but they

sure put on a grand floral show. Go to your favorite nursery or garden center (in the spring) to view many of these plants.

Many rare species and cultivars (types) are also available from online and mail-order nurseries. Please order from specialist nurseries instead of generalized growers. Specialist nurseries take better care of their plants, are true to name, and ship the plants without stem bending or breakage.

Try not to damage the stems, such as bending them or damaging the thin bark. This breakage will only cause the vines to experience a significant setback to develop well. Try to purchase undamaged vines and be very careful when planting. They need to develop on a sturdy support structure. The vines need to grow in as much sunlight as possible with fertile, well-drained and mulched soil. Mulching helps cool the roots but also retains moisture and controls weeds.

Clematis is not a quick grower, for it may take two years or more for them to become established and bloom.

Most species and varieties will survive zone 4 or 5 winters with few problems. Evergreen varieties need to grow in warmer zone locations. Prune these vines after they bloom so they can form flowers only on last year's wood.



Most Clematis are scentless, but a few species provide a noticeable fragrance. One significant and beautiful species is *Clematis paniculata* (shown above), known as the **Autumn Flowering Clematis**, is one of the most popular, small-flowered Clematis grown throughout the world. This vine blooms in the late summer and throughout the fall with masses – and I mean A LOT – of small, pure white, single blossoms. All these flowers release a sweet almond perfume into the air.

A good deal of Clematis species is slow to wake up in the spring after their winter slumber. This lethargy can cause concern for new

gardeners thinking the vines are dead. Allow them enough time in the Spring to awaken.

Clitoria – Butterfly Pea

Clitoria ternatea



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The colorful practice of botanical gynecology.

If this ebook had the same rating system as movies and television shows it may include something like this: “Rated PG-13. Parental guidance is advised.” What makes this vine so unique to allow such a cautionary rating? The structure of the flowers, even with the basic Sweet Pea-style look, has evolved a ‘somewhat’ resemblance to human female genitals – specifically, the clitoris. Time to smile, giggle and mumble to everyone. Okay, let’s calm our vivid imaginations down and

admire the profound beauty of these blossoms. That stunning deep, sky-blue color of the petals is so eye-catching.

It is native to the tropical areas of Malaysia, Thailand and other regions of Asia. Sometime around 1739, explorers shipped seeds back home as soon as possible to show-off, brag about, and talk about those blue petals. Cue more smiles, giggles and mumblings again.

Today, this plant grows wild in many tropical areas around the world. They don't appear to be invasive – surprising, for many vines can be in non-native areas of the world.

The tendrils twirl about wrapping around any supporting structure. Under the best growing conditions, such as plenty of sunlight, fertile, and moist soil, they can climb to over 10 feet tall. Not a giant, in any sense of the word, but makes a great fast-growing and long blooming annual.

Seeds are challenging to find. A few famous English seed companies have some in stock. A rare pure white form is also available – somewhere.

Forget about the anatomy lesson and grow this vine for those exotic blossoms.

Cobaea – Cup and Saucer Vine

Cobaea scandens



Well, here is a vine we can all go batty over.

Native to Mexico and tropical South America this popular vine is famous for its large bell-shaped flowers. As the common name implies, the green sepals represent the saucer while the white changing to buff-purple petals are the cup. Other common names of this vine are Cathedral Bells, Monastery Bells, and Mexican Ivy.

This plant has a fascinating history starting with its discovery in the 17th century by Spanish Jesuit missionary Bernardo Cobo (1582-1657). Cobo was also a naturalist who studied the region's plants and animals.

This unusual vine caught his eye and everyone else who sees the flowers for the first time.

It also intrigued Charles Darwin, not for the flowers, but for how the vines twisted their tendrils around supports. He wrote about this plant, in part, in his book, *"The Movements, and Habits of Climbing Plants,"* published in 1875.

Cobaea is hardy to zones 9 to 11 so most of us will need to grow it as an annual. For greatest blooming during the summer, plant the seeds indoors several weeks before the last frost date. Once germinated, the vines will slowly grow, but when transplanted outdoors, in as much sunlight and fertile soil, it will grow by leaps and bounds. Blooming occurs by mid-summer with masses of large flowers. They have a sweet scent, but my nose detects nothing.

The vines grow well on any structure, but in tropical to semi-tropical locations, they can grow everywhere and can become invasive. By being raised as an annual, it becomes more manageable – growing to under 10 feet tall.

Hummingbirds pollinate the blossoms, but the discovery of strange claw-like markings on several flowers growing in Mexico suggested another pollinator. Someone discovered bats also pollinated the flowers and had to get a firm grip (via the claws) when holding on to the blossoms. Are bats going to be flying at night to quench their thirst on my Cobaea flowers? Are they going to get into my house, hair, and in my belfry? The answer is no.

Gelsemium – Carolina Yellow Jessamine

Gelsemium sempervirens



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Please, Mister Postman, look and see...

The Carolina Yellow Jessamine is native to the southern areas of the United States and in Central America. The name Gelsemium is a slurred Italian pronunciation – with a hint of Southern drawl – of gelsomino, which means jasmine in Italian, though not related to Jasmine. Well, that was a lengthy and confusing explanation!

Most forms of this vine are only hardy to zones 7 and higher, but try to obtain the variety called **Margarita** for it's unique in being hardy to zone 6 (or 5) if well protected from the severe cold.

This very floriferous vine is easy to grow in full sunlight and most types of soils and withstands high heat and humidity. Blooming begins in early spring, continues well into summer and you can even get some bonus blooms in the fall. The beautiful buttercup-yellow 'funnel' or trumpet-shaped flowers are fragrant, and to my nose, the scent is of almonds or baby powder. The stems will twine around any object and can tower to 12 feet if not cut back. They will also grow-like-mad as a groundcover.

The entire plant is poisonous – for deer and rabbits have learned to leave this plant alone. A good idea is don't grow this vine if you have children and pets in the area.

This plant will make an excellent, colorful and fragrant vine for any sturdy, supportive location. When I visited South Carolina one summer, I saw it growing up and around many mailboxes, fences, and trellises. How this plant became associated with growing on mailboxes is debatable, but I am not sure if the mail carriers love or hate it. Well, things twining up mailboxes could be worse for them; poison ivy immediately comes to mind.

Gloriosa Lily – Rothschild's Climbing Lily

***Gloriosa superba* 'Rothschildiana'**



It sure is nice having gobs of money to do whatever you want.

Less familiar names of this bizarre plant are Flame Lily, Tiger's Claw, Fire Lily, and a few others.

If you never viewed the flowers of this strange plant, you need to grow it. This small vine is an eccentric member of the Lily family and native from East Africa and Asia. It thrives in tropical forests to grasslands as long as the climate is frost-free.

Seeds are scarce, and seedlings need years to grow before flowering. Garden centers and nurseries don't sell them, but a few online nurseries offer tubers or potted plants. These long tubers are brittle and may break unless carefully handled.

The vines will grow to a little over five feet tall and climb in a remarkable way. The shiny, green leaves have their tips drawn out to a small tendril that will wrap around a small twig or other thin, but firm, support. Scattered along the stems are large, lily-like, downward-facing flowers. The other striking features include the stamens, which splay underneath the petals like wooden spokes of a wagon wheel and the green style and stigma, which do not hang downward but juts out at a 90-degree angle. Such a weird construction of floral parts!

The variety called **Rothschildiana** has wavy bright red and yellow petals. Named after Lionel Walter Rothschild; 2nd Baron Rothschild (1868 - 1937), he brought this vine to England from his zoological travels in tropical Africa. Lionel was a son of the wealthy Rothschild banking family of England. When not banking and being a member of Parliament, he would venture off (or use explorers) to parts unknown to collect, mount, stuff or capture birds, insects, animals and the occasional pretty plant for his personal – and later, a public – museum.

This vine is hardy to zones 10 and 11 and is an annual everywhere else. It appreciates full to partial sunlight and well-drained, fertile soil. You can plant them in containers, and in the fall allow the soil to dry. Later, store the flowerpot over the winter in a cool location. Do not dig up or separate the tubers – they will break. Water the pots in early Spring and new shoots will regrow and bloom by midsummer.

This vine is very poisonous so keep it away from all mouths – human and pet.

Humulus – Hops Vine

Humulus lupulus



This (flower) bud's for you!

People ate this vine like Asparagus until someone, somehow, and somewhere discovered harvesting the dried female flowers and seeds in the Fall gave a pungent aroma and bitter taste to a famous drink

called beer. Talk about amazing discoveries! I'm a teetotaler (a diet cola is my carbonated 'hard-stuff' beverage), but I can never hold back a smirky smile knowing when guys gulp down a few (no, several – let's go with the gusto) beers they are drinking a flower-laced alcoholic solution. Don't tell them. Many people believe hops is a grain, like wheat. Hop flowers and beer making – what a bizarre combination!

So, what is this vine and why grow it in your garden? Technically, the vine is a "bine," for instead of using leaf tendrils to climb with, it has twining stems. Okay, this is nothing to contact your city council representative over, but it shows how different climbing plants solve similar ways to climb.

Most vines listed in this ebook are annual, woody or tropical plants but Hops are herbaceous perennials, having either male or female plants.

For many of you who don't care one iota about beer making but wants to grow this vine for fun, here are a few interesting details. Those female flower cones have a surprising pine-like scent and attract butterflies, but pollination is by the wind – via the male catkins.

They prefer to grow in full sunlight to partial shade, and fertile, well-drained soil. A well-grown vine can grow to over 15 feet tall but trimmed back to a more manageable size for whatever support it needs to grow on. A trellis, arbor, pergola or fence is adequate as support.

Most hop vines are very hardy to zone 4 and native to Europe and southwestern Asia. Plants having escaped cultivation (via by seeds) now grow in many areas in North America. I have seen wild Hop vines growing up small shrubs near roadsides. They are very versatile plants!

So, hoist a cold one and say "cheers!" to this fascinating vine, err... excuse me, bine.

Hydrangea – Climbing Hydrangea

Hydrangea anomala petiolaris



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It will not vine before it's time...

Get those visions of massive clusters of blue or pink-flowered Hydrangeas dangling high above your head out of your mind. Although, that would be a grand sight! No, this hydrangea is not like those large shrubs planted near a house foundation. This species has flat-topped, white lace-cap flower clusters but grow as a vine. And it isn't some puny vine either but a 30 to a 90-foot giant! Don't worry; you can control the height to a size that's more to your liking.

One important recommendation, though, is to never plant this vine near your house unless it's made of stone or brick. To support its weight, the plant produces permanent aerial rootlets that cling and glue onto a support structure. Any porous surface, such as wood, will rot when covered by the massive amount of glossy leaves. This foliage can damage even a house covered with vinyl siding. Stone or brick houses are more durable, but a supporting structure away from the house is best when growing this vine.

So, why is this plant popular? Most likely, it grows best in shady conditions where other vines would suffer. Yes, it thrives in dim to shaded locations – like the north side of a house or under a tree-shaded structure. This requirement is essential when grown in hot and sunnier places.

This species is hardy from zones 4 to 7, is deciduous (drops its leaves for the winter), and prefers early morning sunshine, afternoon shade, and moist but well-drained, fertile soil. Massive blooming begins in late spring, but you can expect sporadic flower clusters all summer long.

Although having the potential to grow very tall, the stems also spread outward. Please be aware this is not a fast-growing vine. The first year after planting, the plant will appear “sick” – meaning, not much growth. The second-year growth shows improvement in attaining height while the third year makes a noticeable leap upward. You will not view flowers appearing on a healthy vine until four or five years. Well, that is disappointing! What you don't see is the extensive growth of the root system during this time. A well-established root system, for any plant, is critical to creating top growth and prolific flowering.

Ipomoea – Morning-glory Vines

Wakey-wakey, rise and shine!

Let's see... how am I going to explain all the different Morning-glories without writing several volumes of ebooks? The sheer size of varieties and species (over 500 worldwide) appears to be a favorite creation by flower designer Mother Nature. Most of the species sport a similar tubular or funnel-like floral structure. For any variation in color, and size there is a representative vine. One standard feature they share in common is they are all tropical plants. Yes, not one hardy floral-soul in the whole group. As long as they experience a warm, moist spot to set down roots, they are happy to grow as annuals.

They are all impressive vines for any gardener to grow. If you are a plant and have a limited time to live, you better grow fast and bloom furiously to form as many future generations of seeds as possible. And these vines are experts at exploiting this way of life.

So, let's take a quick tour of the more popular representatives of this family for you to grow in your garden. For the sake of clarity and ease, we will review them based on alphabetical order of their Latin species names.

Ipomoea alba bona-nox – Moonflower or Moon Vine



This popular climbing, tender annual, is a cousin of the common Morning-glory (hold on, we will get to them). This vine can grow over 10 feet tall and blooms in the evening until morning with large, velvety white blossoms. I suppose we should call them an “Evening-glory.” As the petals unfurl they release a sweet, clove or lily-like perfume into the evening summer air. Now, that should not come as a surprise for many flowering plants that prefer to bloom at night need white petals and fragrance to attract pollinator insects, like moths.

Planting this vine in full sun and poor soil helps to form more flowers than leaves. Morning shade helps to prolong the flowers into mid-day. The perfect place for this beautiful vine is near a patio or deck where you can enjoy the perfume in the evenings.

A gardening friend once told me that Moonflowers, unlike Morning-glories, will not bloom while they are climbing but only when they reach the top of a structure and bend over will flowering begin. I never

knew this which explains why my plants rise to the moon and wait an eternity for a flower to bloom – just before the first fall frost. If you have also experienced this trouble, try letting them climb up a shorter structure and then let the top-most vines flop over.

Ipomoea batatas – Sweet Potato



Yes, an edible relative of the Morning-glory. This fact surprises many people – yes, even me – but, the clues are in plain sight such as the vine and flower structures (when they bloom, if ever.) These plants do not climb though; they grow as an extensive ground cover.

Ornamental sweet potatoes are not for the vegetable garden, but for containers and placed in the flower garden. Growers breed new varieties for different leaf colors and smaller, less viny plants. They remind me of less flamboyant Coleus plants.

As for the flowers – few, if any. Okay. I will be brutally honest – for me, they are boring. Let’s move on to...

***Ipomoea coccinea; Ipomoea x multifida;
Ipomoea quamoclit – Red Morning-glory,
Cardinal Climber, and Cypress Vine***



These vines all appear to have small, tubular, star-shaped red flowers. Unlike our regular Morning-glories, the flowers of these three species will bloom most of the day and attracts many hummingbirds and butterflies.

They are confusing to distinguish unless you look at their leaves. *Ipomoea coccinea* (the **Red Morning-glory**), being native to the eastern half of the United States, has three-lobed, heart-shaped leaves. Being

invasive (by producing large amounts of seeds), plan to grow these plants in areas where they cannot spread.

The most popular species grown in many gardens is the **Cypress Vine**, (*Ipomoea quamoclit*,) shown above, having different lacy, fern-like leaves. Discovered flowering in Central America by early explorers, not long afterward it was reported growing in Italian gardens by 1500. Thomas Jefferson may be the first person in the recently formed United States (Version 1.0), in 1790, to enjoy its beauty in his gardens at Monticello. Tom always liked collecting rare and beautiful plants for his home. This vine is controllable in growth but still forms many seeds.

The **Cardinal Climber** (*Ipomoea multifida*) has a “hand and fingers” leaf shape. A hybrid of the two above species, the flowers are sterile and forms no seeds. This vine does not produce as many flowers as the other two species and is challenging to find seeds from garden centers.

Okay. Now that we have sorted how to tell these vines apart, how do we grow them? Well, like any Morning-glory, they need a supporting structure, lots of sunlight and well-drained soil. Like most garden plants, try not to over-fertilize them for you want more flowers than foliage.

Ipomoea lobata – Spanish Flag Vine



The older Latin names of this plant are *Mina lobata* and *Quamoclit lobata*. Now we are talking about growing a fun, energetic and colorful relative of the Morning-glory! Let the summer floral-party begin!

This plant's blossoms look different from the typical 'glory' appearance. They are more tubular and arranged on a spike. A single flower has changeable colors of red (in the unopened bud stage) to orange, yellow, and white. At the white stage, the stamens and pistils fully extend for pollination. This display extends down the length of the flower spike –

called a raceme. These colors represent Spain's flag – thus the nickname.

This vine has the potential to grow upwards to 12 feet tall (and more) but also branches outward to cover a fence. Like all various members of the Morning-glory clan, this vine prefers to grow in as much sunlight as possible. Unlike other Morning-glories, the flowers bloom all day.

One of the significant benefits of growing this vine (if you live in North America) is the blossoms attract hummingbirds by the millions. Well, no, but they draw them in droves. I grew several various colorful Morning-glory varieties one summer. The birds overlooked them but competed against one another to sip nectar from this vine's flowers. Watching them was, at first, comical, but they turned vicious! Have you ever seen hummingbirds fight? Grow this vine to see this happen.

Now it's time for the 'main event,' or the 'keynote' vine of this large family. It is... drum roll, please...

Ipomoea tricolor – Morning-glory



By far, this is the most famous member of this immense family. I must point out Morning-glories is a consortium of three species rolled into one. The older Latin names are *Ipomoea purpurea*, *Ipomoea hederacea*, and *Ipomoea nil*. The common Morning-glory has different leaf appearances, but the colorful funnel-shaped flowers look similar.

This species has evolved many varieties over the years with colors confined to the blue-purple, pastel reddish-pink, and white shades. Most of the flowers show a white center along with a whitish or darker color star pattern in the petals.

Garden centers and nurseries offer them for sale as starter plants before they vine out too much. To get the color or specific variety you wish to grow, sow and grow them yourself by seed.

This annual vine loves the heat and humidity of the summer. Cold growing conditions are the bane of its existence. Gardeners can have difficulties raising the young vines. I suspect, they may grow them in

the cold outdoor soil. They prefer warm growing conditions, both in the air and soil temperatures.

As soon as summer is at its peak, these vines will thrive, twining up and around support structures. They will also sprawl along the ground. By mid-summer, they produce many flowers daily but bloom only in the morning before the sun becomes too intense. If it is a cloudy day, the show may extend until noon. Why do they do this? Why not bloom all day? No one knows for sure, but it may apply to early morning pollinating insects.

Native to Mexico and Central America, our common morning-glory has a rich history, but not as being colorful garden vines. The Aztec Indian culture of Mexico believed chewing the seeds provided a way to communicate with their Sun God. Yes, it was their form of a “trippy” drug with psychedelic and “out of this world” visionary applications. So, the common Morning-glory held a special honor for their religious observances.

Somehow, and by some way possible, the Morning-glory became popular in China centuries before Marco Polo stopped by for a neighborly visit. How did that happen since the vine originated in Mexico and Central America? One theory is the sweet potato (remember, it is *Ipomoea batatas*) went westward by seafaring settlers from Central and South America to other islands throughout the Pacific. Is it possible the other Morning-glory species hitched a ride along with those sweet potatoes? Someone may have had an eye for beauty and took seeds along with them.

Anyway, seeds made their way to China but grown not for the colorful flowers but the seeds. The seeds contain, for them, medicinal properties, including as a laxative. Okay. They enjoyed them to stay ‘regular.’ Quickly moving right along....

On some uneventful day in the 9th century, someone introduced the seeds to the Japanese. Bless them, for they credit themselves as the first people to cultivate these vines as ornamental garden flowers. No mind-bending, bowel cleansing seeds for them – only the joy of experiencing

floral beauty! Since then, they popularized Morning-glories to the rest of the world by creating unusual varieties.

So, what should you grow? There are so many varieties to choose from but check the selections offered by many seed catalogs. If possible, view selections of varieties from Japan. They produced some unusual and colorful varieties to amaze you and your friends.

Jasminum – Jasmine

**Jasminum officinale; grandiflorum;
polyanthum**



To be or not to be a Poet's Jasmine vine.

For countless generations, these shrubby-vines have played an essential role in creating happiness. They enriched many souls with pure euphoria from inhaling their fragrant white blossoms. For many gardeners, these plants are annuals, or “houseplants on a summer vacation.”

Hardiness for most Jasmine plants is in zones 8 to 10. You grow them in containers for the home and set them outside until the fall. These plants cannot tolerate cold temperatures so don't plant them in the flower

garden; raise them instead in a container with a supporting structure. Give them partial sun or light shade, fertile soil, warm temperatures, and humid conditions.

Jasmine grows as a shrub but also a vine; first being bushy and later take off into a climbing growth surge.

Jasminum grandiflorum, called **Poet's Jasmine**, is one of the first plants that comes to mind when one thinks of sweet fragrance. A single jasmine vine can perfume an entire room or garden. It is a sprawling, semi-climbing vine; twisting then growing upward until deciding to settle down and become bushy. The flowers are white or pale pink and fragrant from early Summer to Fall and rest from October to March. It is hardy from zone 7 to 10. A similar species is *Jasminum officinale* (or **Common Jasmine** but also referred to as **Poet's Jasmine** – I know, confusing isn't?) but has pure white, scented blossoms and is hardy from zones 7 to 10.

Jasminum polyanthum "**Pink Jasmine**" is a fast-growing, semi-evergreen vine prized for its spectacular display of intensely fragrant pinkish-white flowers. Where hardy (zones 8 to 11), it is a tall climber on a trellis or arbor, cascades over a wall or left to relax as a groundcover. For us cold climate gardeners, we need to be content growing them in containers.

Lablab – Hyacinth Bean

Lablab purpureus (Dolichos lablab)



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My dogdog is also a lablab.

The other famous names for this vine are Indian Bean and Egyptian Bean. Grown in the US and several other countries as an annual ornamental vine, the vast regions of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East raise it as a valuable protein-rich food for humans and livestock.

This vine is of the pea-bean family and produces beautiful clusters of pink-purple blossoms. Fast-growing, Lablab makes an excellent choice to cover unsightly areas if grown on a trellis or fence. The fertilized flowers later form gorgeous burgundy red-purple-black flattened pods

(similar in shape to that of unrelated Lima Beans.) The pods and beans are poisonous if not boiled for a long time to eliminate the cyanide within them. But, they are nutritious when prepared correctly. Livestock seems to have no problems digesting the vines, flowers, and pods – go figure!

Since this is not a cookbook but a garden ebook, let's concentrate on the flowers instead. Known as the Hyacinth Bean, the fragrance of the flowers is like that of spring Hyacinths – but my nose doesn't detect much scent.

Someone introduced the seeds to European gardens by the early 18th century and later introduced to American gardeners by the early 19th century (some botanist-historians say around 1818.) It was – and still is – grown for the ornamental value for a quick growing, floriferous vine with the bonus of producing the colorful pods.

Flower-visiting butterflies and hummingbirds add extra enjoyment for growing this vine. When grown in sunlight and fertile soil, it can grow to 10 feet tall but extends in width.

The burning question is – what does the species name of “lablab” mean? The name rolls off your tongue easy enough – like Bamm-Bamm, in the cartoon “The Flintstones.” Being an Arabic word, I never, in my research of this vine, determined what it means. Many translations of “lablab” mean – brace yourself for a surprise – “Hyacinth Bean.” Oh, never mind the name-game, grow this vine and enjoy those blossoms.

Lathyrus – Sweet Pea

Terms of endearment for any gardener.

There is a broad range of Sweet Pea species and varieties enjoyed in many flower gardens. Not all are vines for some grow in compact mounds. I will concentrate on four species available to gardeners to grow on trellises, fences and other supporting structures. Instead of my usual alphabetical listing of species, I will begin with the obvious “elephant in the room” vine and then comment on the other species.

Lathyrus odorata – Common Sweet Pea



Please forgive me when I change Hallmark’s trademarked signature slogan to “when you care to grow the very best” for this treasured garden plant – grown for their gorgeous colors and outstanding

perfume. In the language of flowers, sweet pea means “delicate pleasures” and what pleasures they are!

I love floral history so let's begin with the who, what, when and where facts on these favorite vines. Discovered by a Sicilian Monk named Father Francisco Cupani back in 1699 while touring the various area around the Mediterranean, he collected seeds for friends in England and Holland. Imagine their surprise when the vines bloomed! Out of honor of their friend, they named this strain after him. Today, **Cupani's Original** is one of the most popular varieties grown in gardens around the world. The vines grow to well over eight feet tall and give an abundance of pink and reddish-purple blossoms exuding that sweet perfume.

Over time, a great number of varieties are available for gardeners. I would bore you silly (if not already) by listing even a fraction. But, for now, I recommend a variety called **April in Paris** (or **High Scent** – the same variety but with a different name – don't ask me why). It has large, wavy blossoms colored creamy white to light yellow and with lilac-blue edges on each petal. It is extremely fragrant! I always plant seeds of this variety each spring, and the color and perfume are divine.

Many seed catalogs offer many varieties of fragrant Sweet Peas to grow in your garden.

Lathyrus latifolius – Everlasting Sweet Pea



New gardeners always get confused when growing this perennial species. Its other common name is, yes, that's right, **Perennial Sweet Pea**. Who wants an annual pea when a perennial is available? The fun ebbs away when unsuspecting gardeners discover this species has no fragrance and minimal colors. The blossoms are light to dark pink (or rose) to pure white.

These vines grow well in sunny, dry areas and are tolerant of drought conditions. It is a hardy perennial but has the potential to become too persistent as venturing into the realm of being a weed. Well, I can think of worse weedy plants, but this one has the habit of spreading in prime real estate areas of a garden. This vine is valuable to climb or sprawl on the ground to hide unsightly areas. It has to be tough and proves this by having escaped into roadside areas in certain parts of the world.

***Lathyrus nervosus* – Lord Anson's Blue Pea**



This rare pea is not an actual Sweet Pea but is a distant cousin from South America. Unavailable in garden centers or nurseries, you can find seeds in a few of England's most popular seed companies – sometimes. This beautiful vine has small pea flowers of a gorgeous sky or deep lavender blue and has an unusual scent. Instead of the perfume of Sweet Peas, the flowers release a sweet, medicinal odor.

This pea has blue-green leaves and slender tendrils that will wrap around any upright structure they find. It grows more as a groundcover than a climber. The vines can only manage a wimpy height of two to three feet. Gee, why bother growing upward at all? The main reason is growing in windy locations and falling to the ground. Vines and high winds are never a good combination.

The pertinent question is, "Who is Lord Anson?" Well, he was British Naval Captain George Anson of the HMS Centurion who sailed in 1744 along the east coast of South America and around the Straits of

Magellan. When the crew went on shore leave to find food and water, they saw this plant growing among the grass or climbing small shrubs.

Anyway, according to rumor, on arrival home, the ship's cook presented various members of British gardening circles seeds of this beautiful plant. Captain Anson became the honored recipient of the peas name instead of the cook. For those of you who are still interested in this lengthy and bizarre history lesson, the real reason for ignoring the cook is due to the old British social class snobbery. Why name a new plant after an unknown cook when you got a dashing Naval Captain instead? Rank has its privileges!

Anyway, back to the whole point of this section – this plant needs sunny conditions and something to climb on to grow well. Hardy to zones 5 to 9, these plants must have well-drained soil to survive a winter. If you add some extra sand or gravel to the soil, it would be useful to the plants. As you know, winters can be brutal and can kill the roots and crown so save some seeds.

Lonicera – Honeysuckle

How to suckle delicious colors and fragrances.

The name of these colorful woody vines and shrubs honors Adam Lonitzer (1528-1586), a German medical doctor who later became more interested in studying botany. I know, this is not vital information to text to your friends, but I thought it helps explain how these beautiful plants got their name.

There are over 180 species of Honeysuckle found growing throughout the Northern Hemisphere and most are ornamental vines hardy from zones 4 to 9. They all grow well in full sunlight to partial shady areas.

Some species or varieties bloom only in the spring with a massive flush of blooms while others flower summer to fall. The next time you become very thirsty, head on over to your nearest honeysuckle vine, pluck a flower, nip off the tube end and suckle the sweet honey-like nectar. Do this for several thousand blossoms or get yourself a glass of lemonade to quench your thirst.

Not all Honeysuckles are fragrant, but those that do offers the gardener's nose a profound treat.

What can you plant in your garden? Here are a few excellent representatives of this beautiful group of vines.

***Lonicera heckrottii* – “Gold Flame” Honeysuckle**



This magnificent woody vine is becoming better known for it blooms most of the summer and into the fall. It is hardy from zones 4 to 9. The large blossom cluster is red-pink on the outside, and the interiors of the petals are white or yellow depending on the age of the flowers. White is for the young blossoms, and the yellow signifies an old or recently pollinated flower.

These flowers release a very potent but enjoyable, sweet perfume into the evening and night air. The fragrance gets stronger and stronger during the night. I was awake at 2:00 am one summer morning after a severe thunderstorm. While outside checking for any damage (yes, in my short jammies – with a flashlight – how startling) a strong perfume overwhelmed me. It was coming from this vine. It amazed me at how strong the fragrance was! If you have nothing better to do very early in the morning, this would be an excellent time to inhale this fragrance. Wake up your neighbors and invite them to join in the aromatic ambrosia! They will appreciate your thoughtfulness – or not.

Anyway, it is a vigorous climber, and it attracts the hummingbirds during the day. Grow it in full to part sunlight, fertile, well-drained soil for best blooming.

***Lonicera japonica* – Japanese Honeysuckle**



The perfume of this species is what we associate as being 'Honeysuckle.' This species is considered a semi-invasive vine in many areas of the United States and has spread to other countries around the world. It is native to the eastern Asian countries including China, North and South Korea and, yes, Japan.

If you need a fast-growing climber for any fence, arbor, trellis or any other sturdy support, this is the best climbing shrub. Blooming almost all summer, the flowers change from pure white when young to dark yellow when they age. The vines are fast-growing and twine around other shrubs and trees, but prune them to control its height – which can

grow to 20 feet. The plant can also grow as a groundcover. The leaves are evergreen in warmer growing zones but are deciduous in freezing locations.

Hall's Honeysuckle is the most common variety sold by nurseries. Check your local agricultural laws before purchasing and planting for it can be invasive in “your neck of the woods.” Many other species and varieties are less rambunctious in growing and tamer to have in your garden.

Okay, having a fragrance is terrific but are there varieties that offer brilliant color instead? The answer is a profound YES!

***Lonicera sempervirens* – “Major Wheeler” Honeysuckle**



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By all means possible, plant this variety (and related cultivars) in your garden. It has a reddish-orange to pure red, skinny, tubular flowers. This vine is a powerhouse bloomer, and if you live in North America, it will attract all the hummingbirds in the neighborhood. Oh my, is it stunning!

This vine can grow upward to over 10 feet tall but spreads outward, so make sure it grows on a very sturdy trellis or fence. It is tolerant of partial shade and blooms non-stop from early to late summer. Some gardening authorities feel this is the best honeysuckle for a gardener to own since it is easy to take care of, is very hardy (zone 4) and resistant to many plant diseases. You know it is popular when it is always sold out in garden centers!

There is a slew of other non-fragrant but colorful honeysuckles for your garden. A visit to your larger garden centers will have them available.

Mandevilla – Brazilian and Chilean Jasmine

Mandevilla sanderi – Brazilian Jasmine



When everything old is new again...

One semi-woody, tropical vine popular with many gardeners today is Mandevilla. Growers also refer to its old Latin name of *Dipladenia splendens*. Although the common names say, Jasmine, this vine is light-years away from being one.

Other than Clematis, Mandevilla is the most purchased vine for new gardeners. If you are an older gardener, like me, this vine falls under the “grown some, yeah – they’re nice, time to move on” classification. The

medium-sized, funnel-shaped flowers are pretty, but, for me, becomes tiresome. I hate stating this, but this vine lacks the appeal of growing it again next year – unless my eyes spot a new flower color.

Henry Mandeville, who, in the early 1800s, served as a British diplomat in Argentina may have discovered this vine although various sources credit them native to Brazil. No matter, for being later imported into England and throughout Europe, unforeseen problems growing this vine arose. Due to being raised in the North Hemisphere with lesser day-length in the fall and winter months, the vines did not bloom well. That was a major disappointment, especially for growers trying to sell the plants to gardeners. It went out of fashion since no one wanted to grow this plant except collectors. In 1955, horticulturists all over the world re-discovered this species and strived to genetically improve on increasing its blooming potential.

Garden centers and nurseries worldwide now sell millions of these vines. Most varieties have light to deep pink and shades of red flowers, but you can also find white and yellow flowered cultivars.

Raise this vine in containers and place on patios, balconies, decks, but also in flower beds. Wherever you plant this vine, it needs a sturdy trellis to grow on. In the wild, the vines can grow to over 20 feet high, but, when grown in containers, the height is a struggle to 10 feet tall. It loves to grow in full to partial sunlight and fertile, well-drained soil.

***Mandevilla laxa* – Chilean Jasmine**



This vine is native to Argentina and Brazil. Wait one second – I thought its name is Chilean Jasmine? Someone should have consulted a map when discovering and naming this species. But hey, what do several hundred miles matter?

What makes this vine special, unlike other Mandevillas, is the fragrant white flowers. They bloom from midsummer to early Fall. For my nose, the blossoms release an Easter lily perfume. The plant has the potential to climb to 15 feet in the wild, but my potted plants grew to six feet tall. Oh well, at least they bloomed well and often for most of the summer.

Since all Mandevilla species and varieties are tropical, they will not survive outdoors over the winter. Store them in the house to keep them for the Spring. By late fall, they may drop their leaves and go asleep until spring. No big deal, for most other tropical plants stored over winter will do the same. Try to keep the containers on the dry side (with an occasional watering) to simulate the dry season in the tropics.

Manettia – Candy Corn Vine

Manettia inflata



Celebrating Halloween all summer long.

Also known as *Manettia luteorubra*, this pretty vine is native to South America and produces a multitude of small, reddish-orange, yellow-tipped tubular flowers. They resemble, both in color and size, the

colorful corn kernel-shaped Halloween candy. If you don't have a sweet tooth, growers also call it the "Firecracker Vine."

This twining vine will grow well in full to partial sunlight and in well-drained, fertile soil. If supported by a trellis or fence, the vine can grow to 10 feet tall or more – but only if grown in a flower bed. You can also raise it in containers (with an added supporting structure) or left to cascade from hanging baskets. When well established in growth, this vine takes honors in prolific blooming all summer.

The shape and color of these blossoms attract the butterflies and hummingbirds.

An Italian physician (and avid bird fancier) named Francesco Saverio Manetti (1723 - 1785) takes the honor of having his name associated with this vine.

Maurandya (or Asarina) – Climbing Snapdragon

*Maurandya barclayana (scandens) or Asarina
scandens*



Will the real *Asarina scandens* please stand up?

Asarina scandens is no longer the official Latin name; now it is *Maurandya scandens*. Many nurseries are reluctant to change this “official” name and continue to grow and sell them as *Asarina*. For this ebook, I will refer to this plant as *Maurandya*. Maybe I can sleep better now.

Hardy only from zones 9 and up, this is strictly an annual climber- creeper vine for most gardeners, thriving in full to partial sunlight with fertile, well-drained soil. The tubular, trumpet-shaped flowers resemble open-faced snapdragons giving the vine common nicknames as Creeping Snapdragon, Creeping Gloxinia, Snapdragon Vine, Twining Snapdragon and a few more.

Many vines are robust climbers or ramblers, but this plant is the opposite – weak, limpy-wimpy and frail. The stems are delicate and wiry but compensate with vigorous growth wrapping around each other and with any available supporting structure such as trellises, arbors or nearby shrubs.

You may have problems finding this vine in garden centers. Easy to grow, but the vines create this messy mass of interlocking stems when raised in close quarters next to other plants. These delicate stems will look like a tangled ball of Christmas lights. If offered, they would be small vines not in flower.

Try to purchase the variety, **Joan Lorraine**, (shown above) having royal-purple flowers. Other types have white or wine-red blossoms (shown below).



They are easy to grow from seeds, and this would be the best way to get the colors you wish to enjoy.

For most gardeners, this vine makes a great display in hanging baskets attracting flocks of butterflies and hummingbirds.

Pandorea – Bower Vine

Pandorea jasminoides



Edouard, you need to improve your imagination.

Native to Australia (specifically New South Wales and Queensland), this fast-growing woody vine (also known as **Bower of Beauty**) covers a trellis, fence or arbor all summer with a funnel-shaped, white or pink blossoms. For my eyes, they look like small petunias (though the plant is unrelated to them.) It is a sprawling vine with glossy-green leaves but needs help to climb. You need to first tie and weave the vines to a structure. This extra effort repays you back with loads of flowers during the summer.

For most gardeners, they overlook this vine in favor of more popular plants like Clematis, Morning-glories, and Passion Vines. Hardy only from zones 9 and up, colder zone gardeners can grow it in containers – just like growing Mandevillas – or as an annual in a flower bed. It enjoys growing in full sunlight but also tolerates partial shade, and fertile, well-drained soil.

The vine's beautiful name refers to Pandora, of Greek mythology fame. In 1840, botanists credit Edouard Spach, a French botanist, with naming this vine after her because the shape of its seed capsules reminded him of Pandora's Box. Honestly? Okay, that's weird. I don't understand this reasoning either, but the name stuck. Don't lose sleep trying to understand his rationale.

Passiflora – Passion Vine, Maypop or Granadilla

Taking your passion for gardening to new heights.

If you had to vote on what is the world's most unusually constructed flower, this would be number one. Most of these plants are tender, tropical vines but a few, called Maypops, are hardy and can survive winter conditions. As the nickname implies, they bloom in the late spring.

They use coiled tendrils to grab hold of adjacent shrubs, and other supporting structures, to lift themselves to heights of eight to 12 feet and more.

The name 'Passion Vine' results not only from the notion that eating its succulent egg-sized fruit gives you romantic tendencies but also to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Many South American people call it by the legendary name of "Flower of The Five Wounds." By historical accounts, sometime around 1609, Spanish missionaries wrote about a beautiful flower growing in the South American rain forests that represented Christ's Passion before and during his crucifixion.

We have to have a vivid imagination of what the flower parts represent. The ten sepals and petals of the flower represent the ten apostles who witnessed the crucifixion of Christ while the corona or a ring of wavy filaments represents the crown of thorns. The five stamens are symbolic of the five wounds, and the three stigmas represent the three-head nails. For extra dramatic flair, the palmate leaves and the many wavy tendrils represent the hands and whips of His Roman persecutors. Like Jesus, the flowers remain alive (well, in full open bloom) for only a day.

With hundreds of species, hybrids, and varieties available for the home gardener, the size and color of the flowers is limitless. While most of the

species grow in the subtropical and tropical areas of North and South America, all can grow in colder zones if raised in containers.

For a hardy variety of Passion Vine try the following species for they are fragrant and colorful.

***Passiflora caerulea* – Blue Passion Vine**



This Passion Vine is one of the most commonly found species in many nurseries. Its twining vines can grow to well over 15 feet if uncontrolled. It is evergreen in tropical climates but becomes deciduous (drops its leaves) where winters are cold.

The hardiness is from zones 6 to 10 but northern gardeners in zones 5 can winter over this species with excellent protection against severe cold weather. Lower zone gardeners will need to grow this vine in containers and hold overwinter in a basement or heated garage. The

four-inch diameter flowers appear all summer with beautiful white petals ringed with blue to purple filaments, and they have a lovely perfume.

By the fall (in warmer locations), egg-size, deep orange fruits become ripe, then you can pick and squeeze them to produce 'Passion-fruit' juice.

***Passiflora incarnate* 'Incense'**



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This gorgeous, 'lily-sweet' perfumed vine is deciduous with vibrant violet-blue, frilly lace-like blossoms that average almost six inches in diameter. Beautiful dark purple and white stripes radiate within each one. Blooming begins early to mid-summer and continues until early fall if the growing conditions are adequate.

For outdoor growing, plant this vine in sunlight to partial shade, well-drained but fertile soil, and a sturdy trellis or other support. If it becomes too tall for you, nip the top-most shoots to cause lower side branching to develop. Individual flowers may last for two days, but many new ones are always ready to bloom.

This hybrid variety is hardy from zones 5 to 10, and in northern areas, the plant will die back to the ground for the winter but new shoots will re-sprout from the ground the following spring. For the southern states, the vines will not die unless subjected to severe cold so get the pruners and cut back some growth. Like all or most Passion Vines, this one makes an excellent container subject. If you have enough light near a window, it can bloom indoors during the winter.



There are other vibrantly colorful species and varieties available in garden centers. Find, and grow, the popular annual species, *Passiflora coccinea* "**Red Passion Vine**" (shown above). The blossoms are a vivid red or scarlet, and the vines are fast growing.

Phaseolus – Scarlet Runner Bean

Phaseolus coccineus



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Merging the vegetable garden with the flower garden.

Your neighbors and family will think you have waded into ‘Insanity Bay’ by growing beans in your flower garden. Let them believe that until this vine blooms. Then, they will say you are a genius. Yes, you are growing these plants for the flowers instead of the pods.

Scarlet runner beans are vigorously climbing, annual vines that can reach up to 10 feet or more in a typical growing season. They flower from August to October in most northern gardens but have a more extended enjoyment in southern gardens.

Grown for the beautiful flowers, a bonus appearance is the colorful bean pods. They are a vivid rose-pink when young but matures to a black, or a darkened violet color. So, later in the summer, both flowers and purple-black pods are dangling from the vines. While your eyes feast on the bright red flowers, your taste buds and stomach wonder if those pods are edible. The answer is a definite yes – although the flavor can be more “beany” than garden-grown Green Beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*).

Plant the vines in full sunlight to light shade, and in fertile, well-drained soil. Being long growing vines, they will need to grow on sturdy trellises or fences. For a traditional look, allow them to climb up a teepee of four or more wooden poles tied together.

These beans first appeared as early as 1750 in the United States. Botanists think the vines are native from Mexico to Central America. Colonists and explorers got the seeds from Native Americans and theirs from the Hopi Indians and theirs from the Aztecs. Whew! Those were valuable beans!

Many gardeners assume these beans are annuals – which they are, in northern climates, but are perennial in southern gardens. Their hardiness extends from zones 7 to 11, and here they form swollen or bulbous roots. By preventing the soil from freezing, these roots will “re-sprout” in the spring and grow into more significant, and extensive, vines. Another method is to dig up the swollen root in the fall and store slightly dry during the winter. I did not know this – and maybe you did not either!

Although the blossoms are pure red, there are other known varieties with different colors. One stunning variety called **Painted Lady** (shown above) has red and white flowers.

For our purposes here, the flowers are beautiful to admire, and they also attract the hummingbirds. Don't you love beautiful, all-purpose, multitasking plants?

Rhodochiton – Purple Bell Vine

Rhodochiton atrosanguineus



A vine Salvador Dali would have loved to grow.

I am always amazed at the unusual – well, let's be honest and say strange – looking tropical flowers. This vine is of no exception. The two-inch-long blossoms have a Dali-like appearance; they appear to be a bell

but distorted or elongated. I know, confusing but use your imagination. The deep pink to reddish-purple sepals display a “peeled back” bell shape but with an elongated the petal clapper. These petals are dark purple or nearly black and flare outward (like a nob) to expose the stamens and pistils.

Native to Mexico, in 1836, explorers first saw this vine’s dangling blossoms, and it was love at first sight. Although hardy to zone 10, this vine grows well from seed and blooms over the summer. The heart-shaped leaves and thread-like tendrils coil around any structure. A towering height of 10 feet plus is not uncommon when grown in partly sunny locations. The plants will grow well in containers but will scale a smaller height. The blossoms will also look great when planted in a hanging basket.

Like all vines, fertile, well-drained soil is necessary for maximum blooming. Frost will kill this plant, so raise it as an annual. If grown in a container, try to save and care for the vine indoors during the winter. It may not bloom but expect massive re-growth and flowers the following summer.

Rosa – Climbing and Rambling Roses

Hitchhiking your way to the top.

In the famous words of the late English author, Douglas Adams, “DON’T PANIC!” Relax, there is a galaxy of rose bushes more available than climbing roses in garden centers. Climbing roses offer gardeners a sense of classical formality, civility, and decency to their flower garden.

There are two critical prerequisites in growing these taller growing roses. The first is having the patience for them to scale the heights of a structure.

The second essential requirement is the structure itself. All support structures must be permanent, sturdy and attractive. You do not want a weakling, decrepit and ugly structure that commands attention away from the roses.

Climbing roses do not wrap around objects like true vines. Instead of tendrils, they have elongated canes which you must help weave and tie around a structure. Yes, some assembly is required for your new floral toy.

Rambling roses use the carefree lifestyle of throwing out elongated canes here-and-there and hoping another shrub or small tree will keep them upright. If not, the canes will grow upward, and gravity takes over to bend them over. They can appear as giant rose bushes instead of climbers. Yes, rambling roses can grow as climbers, but they still look haphazard.

Modern climbing roses can bloom most of the summer while older, historical or antique (heirloom) varieties and species create one massive, stupendous bloom in late spring to early summer. The difficulty is deciding what type of rose to grow. Remember, you are planning and planting for future enjoyment. There are many classes (or types) of roses, each having representatives that climb or ramble. You

can choose from the old Bourbon, Noisette, Tea and Hybrid Tea roses and others.

Here are a few varieties you should include in your garden.

“New Dawn” Climbing Rose



This old but familiar climbing rose is a blooming dynamo. Discovered as a genetic mutation of a variety called Dr. W. Van Fleet in 1930, this very cold hardy (zone 4), variety will bloom from early summer until fall. Tall growing, you can limit its height by trimming the top-most canes, making the side-branches produce flowers.

Speaking of which, the double blossoms are plump and soft pink or shell-pink. The rose perfume is not heavy but light and subtle. The leaves are a gorgeous dark, shiny green and are disease resistant.

Because of those leaves, this rose can grow and bloom well in more shady locations.

According to many sources, this may be the best climbing rose for any garden.

"Viking Queen" Climbing Rose



This impressive climber, bred by the University of Minnesota in 1963, is super hardy from zones 4 to 10. The long canes produce clusters of

large, fragrant, fully double, deep pink flowers. The foliage is also attractive with a glossy, dark green color. This variety is a vigorous climber but, like all climbing roses, needs help in being secured to a structure.

“Zepherine Drouhin” Bourbon Rose



Named after a French island and not the alcohol drink, this variety, in my opinion, is the best THORNLESS rose you can grow. Well, let's say about 99% thornless for your fingers may find one. First raised in 1868, it is one of the most beloved, having large, deep pink, double blossoms, and strong fragrance.

The canes will grow over ten feet high but bow downward with the weight of the flowers. This size may be troublesome for small gardens, but, hey, you don't come by a thornless rose too often! This variety is

great to grow for children since they will not get pricked by any nasty thorns.

This variety can tolerate partial shady locations better than most roses and still bloom well sporadically throughout most of the summer after a massive bloom in the late spring.

Hardy from zone 5 to 9, this rose has fungal problems, such as powdery mildew and blackspot. Almost all old fashion varieties (including several modern types) suffer from this problem.

Many other climbing and rambler roses are available in most garden centers and online.

Senecio – Mexican Flame Vine

Senecio confusus or *Pseudogynoxys
chenopodioides*



Even Confucius would be confused in pronouncing that name.

First, let's look at those above two scientific Latin names. *Senecio confusus* is the old-but-reliable formal name. The other is the “new and improved” Latin name. Best of luck to you in pronouncing and spelling it! Don't worry (if ever you feel the need to) about pronouncing the new name in public. When in doubt, mumble something incoherent. *Senecio* will always be the real name and not the “don't talk with your mouth full” new version.

The old scientific name roughly translates as, "*I am one confused, senile old man*" due to its haphazard growth, the weird, twisting and turning of the stigma-style tubes, and the furry, white-bearded tufts of fibers (like dandelion seed fluff) on the old flower-heads. Botanists can have vivid imaginations. I am half afraid of what the newer Latin name implies.

This native Mexican vine belongs in the large Composite Family, which includes dandelions, zinnias, daisies, sunflowers, and a few other famous cousins. A general botanical recap is in order here, for, in this family, what appears as one large flower is a group of several smaller flowers.

Anyway, without something to climb on, this plant becomes a dense, sprawling ground-cover – not invasive, but unsightly when grown that way. Allow this plant to twist upward on any support – be it another vine, trellis, shrub, or fence. If planted in full sunlight and well-drained, fertile soil it has the potential to grow to 10 feet tall and be bushy. If grown in a container, the height will be less. You can grow it in a hanging basket allowing the flowers to dangle in the air. These flowers are a stunning orangish-red, like fire flames, attracting our eyes, butterflies, and hummingbirds.

Most gardeners will have to treat this vine as an annual – being hardy from Zones 9-11.

Most garden centers never offer this vine (or seeds) for sale. The only way to buy this vine is through online specialty nurseries.

Thunbergia – Black-eyed Susan Vine

Thunbergia alata



Susan should file assault charges.

Named in honor of Swedish botanist, Carl Peter Thunberg (1743-1828), this vine is native to regions of eastern and southern Africa. Before we venture into describing this vine, I must issue a public service announcement. This is like those late-night television infomercials, and the broadcasting station states they may not agree with or support the product or service. For this situation, the announcement is “this vine is not associated with or related to *Rudbeckia hirta*, a short-lived perennial in the Daisy family called Black-eyed Susan.” This confusion is a prime example of why the scientific Latin names play an important

role in distinguishing actual identification instead of familiar names. Okay, lesson learned and time to move on.

The five-petaled flowers are bright orange, but some varieties are golden yellow, reddish-orange or white. All types sport a darkened center of black to a dark brown which inspires the common name. Sometimes, I feel the common name should be the “Brown-eyed Girl” Vine.

The vines bloom throughout the Summer to Fall until a killing frost. They display extensive dark green, heart-shaped leaves, and the stems can grow to 10 feet or more on a supporting structure, such as a trellis. In can flourish in containers and hanging baskets.

Being tropical, they are hardy only to zones 9 to 10. Everywhere else, it needs to be treated as an annual. Plant this enjoyable vine in sunny, fertile and well-drained areas.

Seeds are available in many garden centers and online.

Trachelospermum – Star Jasmine or Confederate Jasmine

Trachelospermum jasminoides



A rebel plant with a cause to spread joy.

Do you remember the old expression, “if it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, then it must be a duck?” Well, this expression applies to this plant. If it looks like jasmine, grows like jasmine and smells like jasmine, then it must be jasmine. Sorry, no jasmine here. As any gardener knows, jasmine takes on many names for it easy to remember. Tack on an extra descriptive word and you are good-to-go in enjoying the flowers. Trachelospermum ‘doesn’t cut it’ as a memorable name; sounds like a respiratory disease or ailment.

Gardeners living in zones 8 to 10 can grow this as a fragrant climbing vine - shrub - hedge - groundcover or container plant. For goodness' sake, which one? You can grow this vine as "all the above." For a vine, plant it by a fence or trellis and allow it to twine itself upward to an average height of 12 feet. Change your mind and want a fragrant hedge? Clip the tops and side shoots. Want a groundcover? Well, let it flop and grow (but difficult to appreciate the blossoms that way unless you walk around like a dog.) For cold climate gardeners, the best recourse is to raise this plant in a container and train the vines upward.

This plant has dark, glossy green leaves and abundant, scented, star-shaped, or windmill-shaped, pure white flowers. Most of the blooming occurs in the spring, but sporadic flowering happens during the summer. It prefers fertile, well-drained soil and as much sunlight as possible.

One of the common names of this plant is Confederate Jasmine which confuses gardeners into thinking the vine is native to the southern areas of the United States. It is not native but grows there. The Confederate name is associated with the Federation of Malay States – native countries of this vine.

Tropaeolum – Canary Creeper Vine

Tropaeolum peregrinum



When dogs were named canaries.

Many flower names are tributes to famous botanists, (well, celebrated at the time) but this unusual climber is different. Instead of who – it is what and where. The flowers resemble the outstretched, bright yellow wings of a canary. And where do canary birds live? No, not the pet store – but the Canary Islands. Whoa! Hold on now. This vine is native to Peru and Ecuador. Discovered growing near Lima, Peru in the early 1700s explorers shipped seeds back to France, had a “layover” in the Canary Islands, and when they arrived and grown in France, the vines took on the Canary name. Someone goofed – big time.

An even bigger mistake occurred on the actual name of these islands. The Romans named these islands, Islas Canarias or “Islands of the Dogs.” The English word canary is from the Latin canarius, from the root-word canis (or canid,) and that means “dog.” (Getting a headache from my language history lesson?) Sailors reported seeing large dogs by the shore. There may have been large dogs living on the islands brought there by past invaders or explorers, but the most likely explanation is the mistaken identity of large seals as being dogs by those not-so-bright sailors.

Native to the islands were small, yellow, songbirds, taken as exotic pets to Europe in the 16th century. They became known as Canaries. And the rest is history. Wow, that was a historical workout! When you learn about floral histories, expect the unexpected – especially from reading my ebooks!

Our common garden nasturtiums are related to this vine. Like them, the seeds, flowers, and leaves are edible; having a peppery and tangy flavor. Unlike the nasturtiums, the blue-green leaves and the blossoms look different. With all the vines mentioned in this ebook, this one is safe to eat. It’s not every day you can proclaim to dinner guests you made the salad out of lettuce and “flowers and leaves from my beautiful and exotic Canary Bird Vine.” Just be prepared to view their facial expressions of confusion, horror or nervous smiles (like, my host has lost her freaking mind so I will try to act calm.)

This vine is only hardy to zones 9 and higher, so, for most gardeners, it is an annual. Like most annual plants, they quickly grow and bloom from seeds. To experience plenty of beautiful flocks of blossoms over the summer, plant it in full sunlight and fertile, well-drained soil. Allow the vines to climb a trellis, post or fence. If grown in the garden, the vine has the potential to rise to 12 feet, but in containers, the height less. A hanging basket will also display these vivid yellow flowers.

What about our common garden variety Nasturtiums? Don’t they climb? No, not really. Some varieties grow long stems, but they prefer to trail or crawl along the ground. They are not suitable for weaving

throughout a fence for the stems are brittle. The best way to show height with these plants is to plant them in hanging baskets or at the top of walls for the flowers to cascade downward.

Tweedia or Oxypetalum – Blue Flowered Milkweed

Tweedia caerulea or *Oxypetalum caeruleum*



Starlight, star bright, these blue stars are a beautiful sight!

Tweedia is now the accepted Latin name for this unusual vine. Many nurseries still use the old name of *Oxypetalum*. Who knows? By next Thursday, botanists will change the official Latin name back to *Oxypetalum*. Next month, the title will switch back to *Tweedia*. Oh well, a rose by any other name, etc. Speaking of which, this vine has another name of “Southern Star.”

This plant appears to be native to Uruguay and Brazil. Its discovery belongs to Mr. James Tweedie, the head gardener at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, Scotland. During the mid-1800s, he traveled throughout South America collecting plants and seeds then shipping them back home. Do they do these exploratory jobs today? If a position has a good healthcare plan and other perks, I won't hesitate to apply for a position. My only requirement would be to travel back home each night to sleep in my bed.

This vine is related to – hold on to something to prevent fainting – our common milkweed plants. Milkweed? Yes, a climbing Milkweed. It also has the usual white latex sap, but the eye-catching turquoise blue, star-shaped flowers are its main attraction. Those blossoms are so pretty but later turn, as they age, to a somewhat murky gray color (described as mauve.) This color compliments the unusual greenish-gray, furry or felted stems, and leaves.

But wait! There's even more unusualness! Although I refer to this plant as being a vine, the thing has trouble becoming one. What does that mean? The stems have the potential to twine their way upward but seem to struggle when almost two feet tall. I know, this sounds like one wimpy vine.

Tweedia is also not the easiest plant to grow. Root hardy to zone 8, it can only survive outdoors when it has established an extensive root system. It prefers to grow in a sunny location with moderately dry soil. Constant damp and cold soil will kill this plant! You can also over-winter the vine indoors in a container but don't over-water; treat it like a cactus.

Some larger garden centers or nurseries may offer plants and seeds. Viewing those intriguing blue blossoms is worth the trouble in growing this unusual "vine."

Vigna – Corkscrew Vine or Snail Vine

Vigna caracalla



All we need now is a bottle of wine.

This very rare, tropical to semi-tropical, climbing vine is a perennial (hardy to zone 9 to 10), but for most gardens, it is an annual. Related to the familiar Lima Bean grown in the vegetable garden, this vine

produces large clusters of Sweet Pea-like flowers. They are white and purple-blue but change to creamy yellow with age and contorted into a corkscrew or snail shell shaped appearance. But, the huge deal is their strong spring Hyacinth fragrance.

You can enjoy the flowers from mid-summer and well into fall before a hard frost kills the top growth. Being an annual in northern gardens, you can dig up the swollen tuberous taproot. Carefully, lift the root from the ground, wash and then store in damp peat moss or potting soil in a cool, but frost protected area over the winter. In the late spring, after the threats of frost have passed, you can replant this root.

Native to the jungles of Central and South America, this vine thrives in full to part sun (for maximum flower production), good soil, and moderate watering. It needs to grow on a stable supporting structure such as a sturdy trellis or fence for the vine can grow to a height of 15 feet by fall. Don't worry, for plenty of flowers will be at eye and nose level. You can also try to raise this vine in a large-sized hanging basket to let the flowers cascade downward.

Some seed companies sell the seeds, but you need to purchase them early for they always sell out. I have never seen plants offered by nurseries.

Dominicus Vigna (1581-1647), an Italian scientist and botanist, received the honor of having this vine (and related plants like the one reviewed next) named after him. If you ever have a plant named for you, let's hope it is as memorable as this lovely plant.

Vigna – Yard Long Bean

Vigna unguiculata



I hate to think what a ‘Mile-Long Bean’ looks like!

Just in case your culinary interest extends beyond the previously reviewed Scarlet Runner Bean (*Phaseolus coccineus*), this unusual bean will not disappoint you. Related to the above Corkscrew Vine, this bean vine has a different appearance and lifestyle.

Native to tropical Africa, this plant has other common names such as Asparagus Bean, Snake Bean, Long-podded Cowpea, and Chinese Long Bean. Although the name says yard-long, the pod is shorter to two feet long. Well, yard-long is more dramatic than ‘thirty-six-inches-long’ bean.



Grown throughout Southeast Asia and China, the pod grows like our common vegetable garden pole green beans, but not related.

This bean requires a structure to grow on such as a trellis or a teepee of wooden poles. As a tropical vine, it produces best during the heat of summer and will struggle to grow in cold soil and weather. It forms single (or in pairs) pinkish-lavender, “thickened,” sweet pea-like blossoms. What I mean by thickened is the blossom has more bulk or “muscle” than a sweet pea flower. When fertilized, a reddish-green fruit

pod develops and hangs down from the vine. Flowering and pod development continue until a killing frost.

Although fascinating to see and grow, my taste buds did not care for these beans. I cooked them like regular green beans, but the beany flavor was too intense. Oh well, I am a better gardener than a chef.

Vitis – Grape Vine

Vitis vinifera cultivars



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My version of the swinging 60's.

Oh, my goodness where do I start in reviewing this vine for your garden? Well, for starters, they don't flaunt pretty blossoms. They are tiny in large greenish-clusters and overlooked in the late spring.

The main reasons for growing these vines are for the large leaves and the hanging clusters of fruit – duh, grapes – in the Fall. I see fields of grapevines loaded with hanging “goodness” on sunny, but chilly, fall days. But, I adore the beauty of *Vitis riparia*, better known as riverside grapes. These vines climb stream bank trees, weaving about them and

dangling clusters of smaller deep purple fruit. Although seedy, their tart sweetness is delicious.

I will spare you a complete history of grapes but substitute with one of my treasured memories concerning these vines. Back in the early 1960s, when, as children, my older brother, sister, and I used to sit inside a grape arbor on our Uncle Floyd and Aunt Agnes's farm. At the far end of this lattice tunnel was a wide-seated swing. Imagine a hot summer day, swinging within the cool, shady interior of the arbor saturated by the greenish glow of grape leaves. By fall, hundreds of purple grape clusters dangled down out of reach if we stood precariously on strained tiptoes. Oh, how I wish I could revisit those times once again.

Growing these vines is not some weekend affair; they need future planning and construction. Arbors should be strong and durable. Without a sturdy structure, the weight of the vines will break it down within a few years.

The most challenging part of growing grapes is deciding what to raise and waiting for them to produce a crop. It can take years – are you willing to wait that long? Take my advice and grow another vine, something with colorful flowers and is quick to develop. Sit back, pour yourself some wine (or, like me, sparkling grape juice – yeah, I live life dangerously) and enjoy their beauty.

Wisteria

Wisteria sinensis, floribunda, macrostachys



Maybe Jack didn't grow a beanstalk after all.

People always stare at Wisteria when they first see it. I am no exception. I first admired this vine years ago when visiting my Aunt's best friend. She had a large Wisteria growing by her old Victorian-style

house. The vine turned into a tree and grew as tall as the house, in full bloom with fragrant blossoms.

Two species are commonly available to many gardeners: *Wisteria sinensis* or **Chinese Wisteria**, and *Wisteria floribunda* or **Japanese Wisteria**. Chinese Wisteria is hardier but less fragrant than the Japanese vine.

Another beautiful but seldom mentioned species is *Wisteria frutescens* or the **American Wisteria** which is also tall growing with lightly fragrant blossoms. One pretty variety is **Amethyst Falls** with lavender-blue flowers.

Another species more gardeners should know about is *Wisteria macrostachys* or the **Kentucky Wisteria**. Look for the hardy and super fragrant variety called '**Blue Moon**.' This variety has beautiful blue-purple blossom clusters, a pleasant sweet fragrance, and re-blooms during the summer. Most Wisteria blooms only in the early summer. Blue Moon, bred in Minnesota, is bone-hardy to zone 3.

Wisteria needs full sunlight to "a little" shade, well-drained soil and sturdy, long lasting, tall structures to grow well. Also, try to find potted, established plants (like the named varieties listed above) to transplant. Avoid at all cost seed-grown nameless plants. Seed-grown plants take an eternity to bloom causing unsuspecting new gardeners dissatisfaction of seeing no flowers. Blue Moon is a unique cutting-grown variety blooming early for you. You can find it in some larger garden centers.

Now for a word of warning about growing these vines in your garden. They grow tall – VERY TALL! Earlier, I mentioned my Aunt's friend and her "tree" next to her house. It sure looked beautiful, but allowing this vine to grow this tall is a recipe for disaster. The vines can damage house siding, rain gutters, shingles, and roofs – no matter what material covers the house. Always plant these vines far away from the house and other structures.

Vines Not Recommended to Grow

As with any plant, there are vines you should avoid planting. They may have beautiful flowers and a sweet fragrance, but they can become a major problem for you. Some vines described above may spread outside your garden. This process is by excessive production of seeds or spreading outward by new shoots from the root system. By being vigilant, you can help prevent future problems by keeping them in control.

The following vines and climbers are different for they had a noble purpose in being grown in gardens, but also in agricultural land. There was a goal, but soon their growing went too far. Today, they continue to thrive, and, apparently, little can stop them. If this sounds like a plot for a science fiction movie, I wish it were. Sadly, it is a real threat.

When researching these vines for this ebook, I always had this quote in mind from a poem by Scottish poet, Robert Burns. In his poem, '*To A Mouse*,' he wrote, "*The best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry.*" There is another famous saying, "*The road to hell is paved with good intentions.*" The following plants all began with good intentions, ideas, and plans. It wasn't long until the words "we made a terrible mistake" were soon uttered.

Ampelopsis – Porcelain Vine

Ampelopsis brevipedunculata



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How to turn your unsightly areas into even more unsightly areas.

For a vine related to grapevines you would think it would be great for any garden. Not grown for its flowers, this vine's fruit (like grapes) are very colorful but inedible. Starting out as white, they change to pink, blue, purple, turquoise, then black as they age. Different clusters of these fruits will have different colors making a decorative display. You are probably thinking, "Wow! How can this vine be so horrible to grow in my garden?" Well, appearances can be deceiving.

What makes this plant so undesirable is their excessive twining vines and production of seeds. Under desirable growing conditions (which is easy to provide in any garden), this vine will spread fast. The prodigious number of fruits produced also contain excessive amounts of seeds, which have the potential to make a multitude of new plants – everywhere.

Hardy from zones 5 to 9, this vine can cover new ground in a short amount of time. It has escaped from many cultivated gardens into the wild, choking out native plants, even trees.

Introduced from northeast Asia in the 1870s, estate owners valued it as an ornamental for their large gardens to help hide unsightly areas. Mission accomplished, but the estates later turned hideous with these overgrown vines.

Now listed as a “highly invasive plant,” nurseries and garden centers continue to sell this vine to the public due to its colorful fruit. They need to stop doing this, and you shouldn’t purchase them. There are plenty of other colorful vines (like those listed earlier) that provide more enjoyment and less aggravation.

Convolvulus – Field Bindweed

Convolvulus arvensis



Just in case you should lose your handcuffs.

The first time you see its flowers you will think, “Oh, look! There’s a pretty, new morning-glory!” No, it’s not a morning-glory but a close relative. The trouble is, this is a horrible, weedy relative. Oh boy, is it weedy! These vines are thread-like, wrapping all over the place creating a mess of tangled, and intertwined stems. They also have arrowhead-shaped leaves and rather dull, pale lavender-pink to white, morning-glory-like blossoms.

The common name of Bindweed describes it well. In case you need to bind or wrap something together, this vine works well. It works too

well, for it can damage farm machines by clogging and wrapping around moving parts.

Introduced into North America from its native areas within Africa, the state of Virginia first discovered it growing in 1739. Within a hundred years, Bindweed was growing all over the eastern seaboard to Maine. It was also slowly spreading into the Midwestern states and territories. According to historical accounts, it was blooming in the western regions by the mid-1800s. How did it spread so quickly?

Many factors attribute to its rapid spread across the continent and well into Canada. One reason is for the growing, harvesting and distribution of grain. Bindweed has a penchant to grow in agricultural or grassy fields – just like home in Africa. Farmers then transported the grain, along with hidden Bindweed seed capsules to vast areas via railroads. So, instead of slow-motion seed dispersal by bird droppings, this plant could gallop from place to place, in a short time, by the ‘Iron Horse’ choo-choo train.

Ah, but there is another seed dispersal method – from nursery to a gardener. Bindweed is a perennial plant and was herald as a great, new morning-glory. Why grow an annual when a perennial morning-glory would be better? Seed companies sold seeds all over the country – and also to the world. Contaminated grain was also sold and distributed around the world. Oh, dear. All these actions created unfortunate consequences. To save space in this ebook, I will mention that, by now, Bindweed is probably found growing (and despised) all over the world, except the polar areas.

Most of the time, Bindweed transverses as a creeping groundcover but can twine itself up taller plants. You would think we should wade in Bindweed by now, but this plant can’t compete with most other plants. It loves to grow in disturbed ground, such as farm fields, roadsides, railroad byways, and even your new lawn. But, it can’t grow well with other taller plants. But, it bides its time for when the growing conditions become better. Bindweed forms deep taproots. During times

of drought, most plants will suffer, but Bindweed takes advantage of this weakness and grows with abandon.

Hardy to cold zones, these taproots keep the plant alive over the winter. Physical removal of the top growth, in the summer, only causes the vine to re-grow from these thickened roots. Think of it as a Dandelion – no matter what you do, except by using herbicide; you can't quickly kill it. This vine and others listed in this section are serious contenders for world domination.

Hedera – English Ivy

Hedera helix



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Poison Ivy would be more enjoyable to grow.

Our common ivy listed as a not-to-grow vine for landscaping? Say it isn't so! Well, at least other people and I say so. Let's learn a few facts before I explain my "beef" about this vine.

This evergreen plant is native to northern Europe, Russia and Scandinavia – which translates to it being very hardy from zones 3 to 9. It can grow in full sun to shade, in any soil. It can cover the ground and is a familiar sight growing on stone wall houses and encasing tree

trunks. It can do this by using aerial rootlets that secrete a glue-like substance that sticks to a structure.

Okay, based on these facts, let's get to the heart of the "do-not-grow" matter. It is self-clinging, fast-growing, and capable of causing severe damage to house structures. It also hides potentially dangerous problems such as deep holes, power cables and is a prime real estate for hiding unwelcome pests. And, for personal observation, it is just-plain-ugly, especially when covering vast stretches of ground and covering tree trunks. I feel sorry for the trees. Some areas, here in the United States, view this vine as an invasive weed. The state of Oregon bans the sale of these plants for it overruns forests.

Okay everyone, here is my tale of growing this vine. Once upon a time, I planted these vines around my house foundation to control weeds between the shrubs. I thought the vines would "behave" and I could manage them. At first, yes, they looked great filling in the area. But, after two years, the problems developed. The vines grew tired of growing horizontal and decided on a vertical climb into the shrubs and vinyl siding. I was always pulling down the ivy!

For the mat of vines on the ground, it provided the perfect, cool, dark habitat for sow bugs, beetles, and other mini-beasts. They attracted nightmarish, ravenous packs of wolf spiders, then field mice, and, eventually, garter and black snakes. I had created a perfect storm of food-chain pests outside my door and inside my siding. NO MORE! So, during the winter, I ripped out the vines with gusto and replaced them with attractive, pea-sized gravel. Be very wary when planting this vine near your home.

Do yourself a favor, if you wish to have an evergreen groundcover, plant Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*). It also forms mats of horizontal vines but is a lot easier to manage – and it also produces beautiful blue flowers in the late spring. It is hardy from zones 4 to 9. Please be aware this groundcover can also harbor unwanted "wildlife" as I described above.

Morrenia – Strangler Vine or Latex Vine

Morrenia odorata



It's creepy, and it's kooky, mysterious and spooky...

Back in the 1960s, the television show *"The Addams Family"* had the character Morticia Addams (played by actress Carolyn Jones) caring for her "pet" African Strangler plant named Cleopatra. Morticia would feed her raw hamburger (with the funny swallowing-gulp sound effect), stroke, and speak to it. Cleopatra would also wrap around the necks of unsuspecting visitors.

The Morrenia vine, unlike Cleopatra, is not a "fun-type" of a plant to grow in a garden for its hyperactive stems twine around any supporting structure. Found growing in a Florida orange grove in 1957, it has since

spread and growers now consider it an invasive plant capable of strangling orange trees! Also, with so many stems and leaves blocking out sunlight, this vine can starve an unfortunate tree or shrub.

Native to South America, Morrenia is related to our common milkweed plants. Like these perennials, this vine also produces white sap (latex) when injured.

Hardy to zone 9 and above, grow this vine only as a curiosity-annual; raised in containers to view how vines can be “aggressive” in growing alongside other plants. Blooming occurs by late summer or early fall with small, greenish-white, scented flowers. The above photo shows flowers from my vine, but they were not fully open.

Plant in full sunlight, well-drained soil and a sturdy trellis or other structure. You will not find this vine in garden centers, but some rare seed companies sell seeds.

If you live in warm climates, I advise you never to grow this vine.

Mucuna – Velvet Bean

Mucuna pruriens



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Itching NOT to grow this in your garden...

Here is a bean vine you should never grow in your garden – under any circumstance – due to its harmful health properties. It tempted me to raise it from seed to admire its beautiful white or dark purple-black blossoms, but after further research discovered it is one hell of a nasty vine. Have you heard of “itching powder”? It is a powder, used for practical joking, that creates severe body itching when exposed to it. Sorry, it’s not funny, especially if someone has a severe reaction. This vine produces the main ingredient in this powder.

Many plants have “hairs,” called trichomes, on their stems and leaves which help to repel or deter eating or sucking insects. A common garden weed called Stinging Nettles is infamous for them. These trichomes cover (like being wrapped in velvet) the leaves and the seed pods of this vine. When handled, these hairs break off and irritate human skin. The body’s reaction is to initiate severe itching.

You would be wrong (as I was) into thinking people fear this plant like the plague, but they are not. It has been (over 2000 years), and still is, popular for livestock fodder, and treating health ailments in third-world countries.

Native to tropical regions of Africa, India and the West Indies, extracts from the large, black bean seeds of this vine allegedly help ease mood, emotional and sexual disorders. Recent medical studies have shown the seeds contain chemicals that might treat Parkinson’s Disease and other neurological problems. I guess it is not a lousy vine, but, please don’t plant the seeds in your garden. If you are itching to do so, your body will also be itching.

Polygonum – Silverlace Vine

Polygonum aubertii



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The Olympic gold medal for the 10-foot high jump competition goes to...

People also call this plant Fleece Vine, Silver Fleece Vine, Knotweed, Russian Vine, and, my favorite, Mile-a-Minute Vine. Native to Asia, and hardy to zone 4 to 9, this vine is adaptable in many soil conditions and is a no-to-low maintenance plant. Hey, don't we wish all plants were this way?

Although popular to grow, never plant it near a house for it can, within time, pull down shutters, rain gutters, and damage roofs. Once established, this Olympic-caliber twiner can extend itself upward over ten feet – in one year! You can do the math when its allowed to continue growing for several years. Yes, you can trim it back when its young but you would need the use of a tall stepladder. I hope you have good health insurance in case of... well, let's not dwell on that potential outcome.

Anyway, over the summer, this vine produces millions of small, white, sweetly scented blossoms. By late fall, comes constant showers of seeds. By spring, you will find forests of seedlings in your lawn and gardens. Have an enjoyable time weeding them out.

Sometime soon, a cultivar or variety will grow shorter (let me rephrase that as "tremendously shorter") and have sterile flowers. That way, it would be an enjoyable vine. For now, forget about planting it and grow the Autumn Clematis (*Clematis paniculata*) instead.

Pueraria – Kudzu Vine

Pueraria montana



Photo courtesy of Morguefile.com

The South shall rise again – literally, using this vine.

At the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1876, this vine made its debut to the United States from Japan and China, and later introduced, in 1883, to the Southern states at the New Orleans Exposition. At both venues, the government heralded it as an amazing new vine. By the 1930s, agricultural workers planted thousands of vines to help decrease the threat of Dust Bowl soil erosion. By 1974, Kudzu was officially classified as an invasive, noxious weed and earned the infamous nickname “The vine that ate the South.”

At the Expositions, growers advertised it as a great, fragrant vine to grow on porch trellises to help shade houses from the hot southern sun. It worked... boy did it work! Homeowners realized something was horribly wrong when the vines covered their entire home. I'm not kidding!

Kudzu belongs in the pea-bean family. A significant reason for its rampant growth is due to being a legume – its roots being able to obtain nitrogen from soil bacteria. It processes its own fertilizer, even in poor nutrient soils, and also forms large storage roots that provide energy for the plant during the winter even if freezing temperatures kill the top growth.

Kudzu smothers all plants, human structures, and even tall trees within time. So why does it spread so fast? The main culprit for its dispersal is by seed. Birds, along with commercial seed companies, helped spread the seeds to new areas – including a few places in Europe. Selling seeds continued for many years even after realizing it as an invasive vine. It took until 2009 for banning Internet sales in the USA.

Today, the news rarely mentions Kudzu, but it continues a northward and westward progression in the United States. It may increase its travels due to global warming.

It does not limit its ongoing spread to the United States. There are reports of it growing in southern Canada (populations reported increasing along the north shore of Lake Erie), Switzerland, Italy, and in a slew of other locations. Will it continue its quest for world domination or will it be controlled? Sadly, all bets are on the domination prognostication. Just like the Dandelion, how can we stop its prolific growth and spread?

Rosa – Multiflora Rose

Rosa multiflora



Barbed wire would be less of a pain to use.

My father lived to the age of 94. He most likely could have reached the century mark if it had not been for this rose. I may exaggerate about this statement, but he, as a farmer, battled against this invasive rose for many years. For every rose he killed, hundreds sprang up to take its place. Does this sound farfetched to you?

Well, one thing to believe is this rose is one of the most invasive climbing (or rambling) plants, other than Kudzu, found here in the United States.

Government officials introduced this rose from Japan and Korea as a soil erosion control plant and as a living fence (to replace barbed wire) to separate farm fields. From the 1930s to the 1960s, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service championed its use in these measures.

The US Wildlife Service also recommended planting this rose as wildlife cover and as a food resource. And to top it all off, the rose industry encouraged its use as a rootstock to bud or graft on hybrid tea roses. These rootstocks formed new shoots, which quickly outgrew the hybrid rose. My goodness, everybody was using this rose for every purpose under the sun.

BUT – they all forgot, or overlooked, two significant aspects of this rose. First, the canes are long and flexible. As they grow, they bend over toward the ground. When the cane tips come in contact with the ground, new plants develop.

The second and most quick dispersal is by its excessive production of seeds from a tremendous number of small, white blossoms in late spring. One Multiflora Rose plant can form millions – oh, let's be truthful for my father's sake – billions of seeds over its lifetime. They are within the fruit (rosehips) eaten by birds and dispersed to new locations from their droppings.

After all these years, many seeds have spread over countless acres of farm and parkland. Impenetrable thickets of this rose formed, destroying native plants and making land useless or difficult to manage. My father controlled them (to a small degree) in the pasture lands, but it took time, money, along with mechanical and physical labor, to do it. After his retiring from farming, the pasture land reverted to massive thickets of this rose. Oh, how I despise them!

Today, this rose is growing in parts of Canada and Europe (along with a few other countries) – most likely caused by unscrupulous garden seed vendors (by Internet sales) masquerading these seeds as to grow into towering garden roses. They are telling the truth but not the rose you would wish to grow and enjoy.

Conclusion

Grow yourself some climbing happiness!

This ebook scratches the surface on what types of vines and climbers are available to gardeners. Most plants are rare to find in garden centers and challenging to raise – either by seed or plants. A few vines require specific growing conditions to flower well. If you are a new gardener, garden centers will offer easy to grow, and floriferous vines.

Now that you have learned about several climbing plants you may wish to grow a few for your garden. Before you do, determine if they may be invasive in your location.

Please follow these recommendations to control your vines, climbers, and groundcovers:

- Try not to plant your vine anywhere near a neighbor's property. The neighbor may not appreciate new "weeds" popping up all over his or her garden or lawn. Don't laugh or roll your eyes; you could appear on TV's *'Judge Judy'* someday.
- Never plant a tall, spreading vine near or beside your house. It may look beautiful now, but later, it will begin to rip down shutters, gutters, and siding. Extensive groundcover vines will harbor destructive pests. Insurance companies may not pay for the damage these vines will cause.
- To help control the growth of your vines, avoid the temptation to fertilize the plants after they become established in your garden. Once fully developed, they will never need fertilizer. They will bloom better and be healthier and hardier without the added nutrient 'goodies.'
- If possible, plant the vines in containers. The stress of confinement causes a vine to flower faster than one planted in the ground. Why do this? Here, you can decide if you like the flowers. It is easier to discard a potted plant than digging-out an established vine in a garden.

All gardens are fabulous when adding the dimension of height using vines and climbing plants. They will need extra work in managing, but the results of beautiful flowers are worth it. Take your time to determine which vines to grow. Learn as much about them. The more you know, the more you will grow these fantastic and beautiful plants.

Thank you for reading this ebook.

I hope you have enjoyed learning something new about vines and climbing plants for your garden. I have a related ebook with an emphasis on flowering vines with fragrances. It is part of ***The Scent of Your Garden*** series. I think you will enjoy reading and learning from it.

Please visit my author website of <https://gedwinvarner.com> concerning my other gardening ebooks and contact information.

About the Author

G. Edwin Varner grew up on a farm helping his father in the crop fields and assisting his mother in the flower and vegetable gardens. This early experience and learning led him to receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology with a minor in Botany.

For twenty years he successfully owned and operated a fragrant flower mail-order nursery. Unlike most mail-order nurseries publishing colorful but expensive pictorial catalogs, his frugal catalog extensively described the flowers he grew. He once said, "I write a thousand words worth a picture in my catalogs." Today, he has the same style of writing (thankfully with fewer words) through a variety of enjoyable and informative ebooks. This time, the ebooks include color photos of each flower.

He encourages you to cultivate something unique and beautiful in your gardens. His motto is "read about it, see it, grow it, and enjoy it!"

G. Edwin Varner lives in a rural area of northeastern Ohio, USA.