

Passion Vine



The passion vine (*Passiflora*) is a spreading, vigorous tropical vine that can grow to 30 feet or more (see photo below). There are over 400 species. It is partially deciduous in zone 9 and evergreen in zones 10-11. The passion vine requires regular watering and periodic fertilization. It has a weak root system. Passionfruit is oval, two inches long or more, green or yellow, and shriveled when ripe. Passionflowers bloom in “warm” season, April to October, depending on the geographic area. Passion vines attract butterflies.

I discovered the passion vine from posts on the Facebook’s “Arizona Gardening” group. Its surreal purple flowers caught my attention immediately. I am surprised at how many people have success with tropical plants outdoors considering how hot and dry it is in the Valley area. Some Arizona growers have tropical microclimate gardens where the larger plants shade and hold moisture in for those below.

I can’t afford to spend a lot on plants, especially when I’m not confident I can grow them successfully, so after some research I found videos on planting passionfruit seeds to grow vines (see video link). It took a while to find a grocery store that carried them and they are expensive but one passionfruit has a lot of seeds. Sadly, for some reason, my seeds didn’t sprout. I chose to purchase my potted passion vine (see photo) at a home tropical nursery where the entire back of the property is a “forest” of many types of tropical plants. I bought a passion vine named “Incense” because of its particularly beautiful flowers (see photo). I didn’t plant it for fruit but videos indicate that “Frederick” is popular type for fruit.

Passion vines are vigorous growers so it is best to put them on a large trellis from the start. Planting is a little tricky because they have clingy spiral tendrils that wind around things. You have to unwind them from the stake in the pot and then wind them on the trellis. I made my trellis using a 4’ by 8’ wire grid sold as structure material for cement pours. I used metal T-bars for the side posts. I spray painted the grid and T-bars green, pounded the bars in with a posthole digger, and wired the grid to them (see photo).

I suggest planting passion vines facing east. Some articles say east or north, but others say that north isn’t enough sun for full bloom; I agree. The location that I had available faced south and the nursery personnel said it would grow there. Others on the AZ Gardening group site agreed. However, at least as a young plant, the sun and heat were too intense facing south. I had to make a shade cloth structure for it in the hottest summer months and it didn’t bloom. It was also cold sensitive so I used the structure for frost cloth in the coldest part of winter. On the positive side, it didn’t require any more water than my other vines (e.g. trumpet vine, lavender star vine).

I had the passion vine for a year from spring to spring and decided that I wasn’t getting the enjoyment out of it that I wanted because the location required covering much of the year. I don’t have any more space for a vine facing east on my property so I sold the plant and trellis. However, the beautiful purple passionflower still calls me. If an east facing space opens up in my yard, I may try it again. I recommend passion vines for those who are interested in trying a flowering tropical, have a good location, and are willing to invest the time and money.

Passion Vine



My Potted Passion Vine



My "Incense" Passionflower



My Trellis with Shade Cloth Pulled Back



Basic info on passion vine:

<http://www.public.asu.edu/~camartin/plants/Plant%20html%20files/passifloraincarnata.html>

Growing passion vine from seeds: <https://youtu.be/aK033wVMeCE>

Planting passion vine in AZ: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYRAq0HSMlg>

Info on various types of passion vine: <http://www.phoenixtropicals.com/passionFruit.html>