

Yavapai Gardens

Master Gardener Newsletter

April-May 2021



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Perennial Vines

Originally printed in "Hortnews" May 1997; some changes have been included in this version.

by Nora Graf



Perennial Vines can be a good addition to a landscape if you have a place for them to grow.

Vines climb by several different mechanisms.

Tendrill-climbers wrap tendrils, which are slender, and flexible side-shoots around anything they can. (Think pea vines). They can easily be trained to climb trellises, fences, wires, posts, etc. They don't climb untextured walls or something that lacks structural support for the tendrils to grab onto. There are both stem tendrils (grapes) and leaf tendrils (peas).

Tendrils with adhesive disks—these plants have tendrils with sticky surfaces at the end (Boston Ivy).

Twining is where the stems wrap around a support. They are either twining leaves or twining stems. Twining leaves are where young leaves twist around wire, strings, other leaves, etc. to support them (Clematis, vining nasturtiums). Twining stems twist around whatever they touch. The direction of the twining depends on the species of the plant. Some go clockwise, some counterclockwise, (pole beans, Morning glory, Honeysuckle).

Aerial rootlets are root-like structures growing out of the sides of stems. They can attach to textured surfaces. Ivy is an example. In the case of ivy, which does grow in some areas of Yavapai County, you don't want to have it growing against a structure. The rootlets can be invasive and cause damage to walls. It can grow through small cracks in walls. Make sure it has a support system that you aren't living in.

Scramblers have long, flexible stems that can't actually climb on their own. They sometimes have hooks or thorns to help them hang on to something. Climbing roses are a good example; they will need help to stay on a trellis.

Queens Wreath (*Antigonon leptopus*)

This is a native of Mexico and is a fast grower that can get to 30 to 40 feet, climbing by tendrils. Queens Wreath is cold-sensitive, so it will die back in the winter but should return in the spring if you mulch the roots well. Grows best in the lower elevations of the county. It has bright green heart-shaped leaves with trailing sprays of rose-pink or white flowers. It's a nice plant for late summer and fall bloom. Even if it doesn't die back each year, pruning encourages a lush and vigorous growth. It can grow up to 20 x 20 feet. Prune the vines to the ground each winter. Because of its size, make sure the structure it is clinging to is strong enough to support it. Queen's Wreath blooms better if it isn't watered or fertilized too heavily. Grow in the warmest location you have.

Clematis (*Clematis* sp.)

The name Clematis comes from a Greek word meaning "climbing plant." There is one North American native clematis, the American Virgin's-bower (*C. virginiana*). Most cultivated varieties are not American; they've been hybridized from Japanese and Chinese species. These hybrids came to the United States in 1858. Beautiful flowers are the hallmarks of this vine. A large variety of flower shapes and colors are available. Depending on the cultivar it can be deciduous or an evergreen vine that blooms in the spring or summer. It needs a trellis, tree or some type of open framework for the twining vines to grow on. Plant in the shade as hot, full sun can bleach the color of the flowers. The roots prefer cool soil, so mulch heavily, even placing rocks or the soil to keep the roots cool. An alternative is to plant it in the shade of an evergreen shrub, allowing it to twine around its branches. You don't have to worry about the vine overwhelming the shrub, it isn't a vast robust plant. Stems are easily broken so don't plant it where kids play or people can brush them. Prune according to the season the flowers bloom. Spring bloomers grow on previous year's wood so cut back a month after flowering. Summer and fall bloomers grow on new stems so prune in the fall or early spring. There are some heat tolerant varieties but probably best for the higher elevation areas of the county.



Honeysuckles (*Lonicera* sp.)

Honeysuckles are known for their profuse, usually fragrant, blooms. The genus *Lonicera* is huge with more than 150 species that includes shrubs and vines. Some honeysuckles are native to North America. Despite those native species, the commonly

grown *Lonicera japonica* is a Chinese species that became the iconic honeysuckle of vine-covered porches and verandas. Unfortunately, they are very aggressive growers up to 50 to 100 feet in length and can infiltrate tiny spaces in structures and break them apart. These were commonly planted but many honeysuckles are invasive and can spread quickly especially in wetter environments. I wouldn't recommend them especially in riparian areas or in an area where the soil stays moist for long periods of time.

These might be better choices:

Arizona Honeysuckle (*Lonicera arizonica*)

This is an Arizona native plant. It is not a big shrub, maybe growing to 6 feet but its bright red/orange trumpets are good hummingbird plants. It isn't easily found but if you can it could be a nice addition to a native garden (*The Arizona species looks similar to Major Wheeler, pictures are of Wheeler*)



***Lonicera sempervirens*, Major Wheeler**

Also known as Coral or Trumpet Honeysuckle. This is also a hummingbird plant with its bright red and orange flowers. It is a twining vine that grows 3 to 20 feet long. It has bright green, glossy twin leaves with large clusters of red and orange yellow flowers at the ends of the stems. It has red inedible berry fruit. The plant is not too aggressive and is a good climber or can be a ground cover. Originally native to Southeastern US. The literature says it can be evergreen or deciduous depending on the climate. In Camp Verde mine would lose most of its leaves in the winter. Likes full sun to partial shade. It doesn't mind clay soils but don't overwater. Prune after flowering.



Lady Banks Roses (*Rosa banksiae*)

This plant doesn't have tendrils or aerial roots, but its long, slender stems can be fastened to a trellis or wall. Lady Banks roses are usually white or pale yellow and bloom in profusion. They can be nearly evergreen in milder climates. White flowered forms seem to be more evergreen. Small to insignificant thorns. This rose prefers a little afternoon shade and is resistant to mildew and aphids. You may need to

provide it with regular applications of iron chelate. Its average size is 1 to 20 feet but the famous Tombstone rose is a Lady Banks and is considerably larger. It is considered one of the largest roses in the world.

Common Trumpet Creeper (*Campsis radicans* or *Bignonia radicans*)

This is a great hummingbird plant, sporting clusters of orange red flowers through the summer. It grows best in full sun and can grow up to 30 to 40 feet. You can cut it back by pinching the stems back to keep it under control. It also reduces the problem of having a bunch of bare stalks at the base of the plant. If you don't pinch it back, make sure you prune it back periodically. Trumpet climbs by



using aerial rootlets. You will need to tie the stems to strong supports. It looks great rambling over an arbor or sturdy trellis. Because the branches get heavier over time it is important to tie the vines to a strong support. It is deciduous. In freezing temperatures, it will die back to the ground but comes back in the spring. Grow in full sun. The roots will sucker and can spread through the garden.

Crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*): Crossvine is a fast growing vine that climbs using tendrils with adhesive disks. The bright red flowers are very striking and the foliage turns reddish purple in the fall. In the coldest areas it will lose its leaves. In very cold winters the plant may die back to the ground but will resprout. It is quite versatile in that it can grow from full sun to part shade, can even tolerate full shade but will not flower. To keep the plant under control prune after flowering.



Wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis* and *W. floribunda*): This plant puts out a spectacular spring bloom with large clusters of fragrant purple, pink or white blossoms. The purples come in a variety of shades. The flower clusters can be a foot or more in length. Wisteria is a deciduous vine that grows well in full sun. In our soils it is prone to chlorosis so it needs regular applications of iron. Very strong supports are required as the vine over time can cause damage to any structure not strong enough to support the weight of thick heavy stems. Wisteria takes more care than other vines in the pruning department. Depending on the form you

want it to take, it needs to be pruned and pinched back at frequent intervals. Best to consult a good pruning book or expert if you haven't grown one before. It can be trained as a small tree or grown in a large container. Wisterias have a reputation for not

blooming. Stress seems to bring out the best in them though. Try withholding all nitrogen fertilizer if the plant grows well and does not bloom. If that fails, try to prune the roots in the spring. Wait until after you are sure no flowers are being produced. Just cut with a shovel vertically into the root zone of the plant. It is best to purchase cutting-grown, budded, or grafted plants as seedling-grown plants may not bloom for years. Remove any suckers during the first few years. Vines can grow 30 to 50 feet. Grapes can be good landscape plants even if you don't care to bother with the

fruit. They are fast-growing and the size can be controlled by pruning.

Grapes (*Vitis* sp.): Grapes can be good landscape plants even if you don't care to bother with the fruit. They are fast growing, and the size can be controlled by pruning. While grapes grown for wine or fruit consumption and are pruned to almost nothing in the winter, you can let them go and they will sprawl between 20 and 30 feet. They will grow in full sun or part shade. They will need a secure strong structure to

support the vines. Insects can be a problem. If you don't care about the fruit, the birds will like it.

Hacienda Creeper (*Parthenocissus* sp.): This relative of the grape is more of a look-alike plant to Virginia creeper. The plant and leaves are smaller, palmate (think of the shape of your hand) and evergreen in mild climates. It also grows slower. Like the Virginia

creeper, the leaves will turn red if it gets enough cold weather in the fall. It has adhesive-tipped tendrils so can self-attach to surfaces. The flowers are small and green and not very noticeable. It can be used to screen something or used as a ground cover. It's a smaller vine growing from 8-25 feet and tolerates poor soils and some drought. In hotter areas it would probably be best to provide some afternoon shade. You don't need to do much pruning, just a trim if it starts to spread where you don't want.

Meet A Master Gardener – Joan Pierce

By Jennifer Moreland Photographs by Joan Pierce



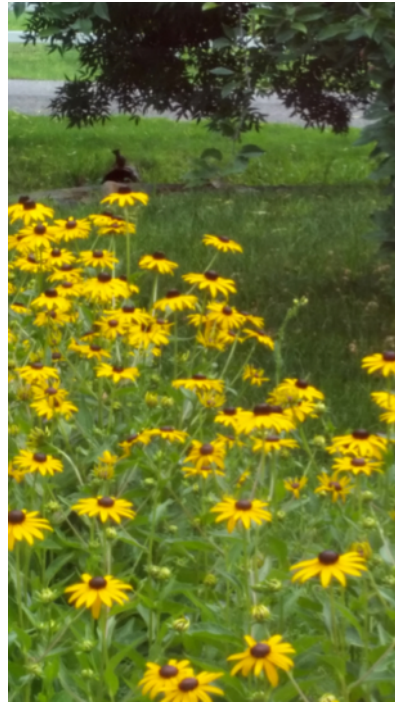
When Joan Pierce completed the Yavapai County Master Gardeners program in 2012, she already had experience in backyard gardening. Joan had been an avid vegetable gardener in San Diego, California. She fondly recalls her first garden mentor Arturo and his spectacular vegetable garden, it was truly a thing of beauty, and not a weed in sight. Her

love of growing has now expanded to roses and ornamentals such as brown-eyed Susan's (*Rudbeckia triloba*), lilacs (*Syringa vulgaris*) and forsythia shrubs (*Forsythia x intermedia*).

Joan bought a house on 2.5 acres of land in Cottonwood that had 45 rose bushes.

Moving to Arizona was a new adventure in horticulture. First, the growing climate and season is much more challenging. Then, there are the relentless pocket gophers. That is why Joan decided to participate in the Master Gardeners training and subsequently volunteer with the Camp Verde Help Desk. She volunteers for the weekend shift in monitoring the help desk emails messages. She claims, "I do enjoy working the weekend help desk because it forces me to do research and I have learned a lot! All the research has made me a better gardener."

Joan truly enjoys her roses and has a lot of respect for the learning curve she mounted to figure out how to care for them. She battled an unfortunate area of root rot that claimed her Rose of Sharon,



an ornamental pear tree and other susceptible plants. She lost a dozen of the original rose bushes to various critters or diseases but she says that now she knows what she is doing, the remaining 33 rose bushes are her daily joy. And she acknowledges that she is always seeking to learn more about being a rosarian.

Her love of vegetable gardening has not diminished. She is currently building several raised garden beds in which to plant vegetable seeds. All are critter-proofed! Her desire to grow and harvest an abundance of vegetables speaks to her love of sharing the harvest. She gave away baskets of fresh produce to neighbors and food banks while living in San Diego and has it in her heart to do so again. She is also practiced in the art of canning and preserving her home-grown goodness.

Being a generous person by nature, Joan volunteers time walking dogs for the Verde Valley Humane Society. She adopted her dog, Jack, who

turned out to be the best deterrent against those gophers. She enjoys kayaking and is currently writing her first book. When she spends time on herself, she likes to watch the online CE seminars, which she finds provides a wide variety of interesting topics. Her advice to new Master Gardeners, "Stick with it because one day something will just 'click' and you'll realize you know more than you thought you knew about gardening in Arizona!"



It's Hard to Say No

by Nora Graf

Spring fever brings out the desire to plant, anything, everything. It's hard to walk into a nursery and not be tempted by tray after tray of lovely looking plants. Of course, you walk out with something entirely inappropriate with no idea where you're going to put it. You are not alone, we all do that. It would be nice if all nurseries carried plants that were suited to our climate and soils and are healthy, but it doesn't always happen. This means you may end witnessing the plant's slow decline as it tells you permanently it doesn't like where it is living. Sometimes you just need to say no when spring fever hits. To save yourself and poor helpless plants here are some tips for garden shopping.

Know what you want before you walk in!

Make a plan and a list and stick to it as much as possible anyway. Before you go shopping wander around your garden and decide what you want or need. Honestly, how many tomato plants can you squeeze into the vegetable garden? A list will help you focus once you're surrounded by thousands of plants. A list doesn't stop you from trying something new but might save you from walking out of the nursery with 10 plants, none of which you needed.

Pick the right plant for the season. Cool-season annual plants won't survive the summer. Pansies, phlox and Nemesia prefer early spring weather. Zinnias, marigolds, cosmos and sunflowers flourish in the heat.

One of the hard things about buying plants is that it's easy to pick the showiest plants but really you should look for those with the fewest or no blooms at all. Smaller is better. You will have a healthier, longer-lived plant if you give it time to settle and grow more roots before it blooms. There used to be a time when you could buy six-packs of small plants. Six-packs have mostly disappeared; you might find some 4-packs but nearly all plants are now sold in 4-inch containers and gallon containers. They are more expensive but they really show off the flowers which is what entices you to buy them. Resist and look for the smaller, non-blooming plants.

Choose a healthy plant. I understand the compulsion to rescue a plant. Nurseries often have sad looking plants being sold at a discount. I'd avoid them. I've rescued a few myself and it's usually a poor bargain, especially for someone new to gardening. Big box stores often have a rack of droopy plants. They look sad because they haven't always gotten the best of care. They are watered too little or

too much, they don't get the correct light and can be scraggly and leggy and even if you take one home they may never do well. You end up with a dead plant. Before buying any plant, look at the roots, are they healthy looking? Long tendrils of roots growing out of the hole at the bottom probably means they are rootbound. Less of a problem with annuals, but avoid it with perennials. Avoid wilting and yellowing leaves. Stick with buying a healthy plant.

Buying Plants Online

Not as fun as going to the garden center but buying online is an option especially if you are looking for specific varieties. Local nurseries, especially big box stores have limited choices; buying online opens up entirely new possibilities. There are some things you should know before buying online.

Research the company. Check out their history and how long have they been in business. Read reviews about the company. Reviews aren't always the best source of information but will give you an overview of what is going on. Are there a lot of complaints about shipping or the quality of the plants? Read both positive and negative reviews. Dave's Garden website is a good place to go for reviews. <https://davesgarden.com/products/gwd/#b>)

Read the company's policies. How are they going to ship your order? Do they have a good return or refund policy? Every company is a bit different so find out ahead of time.

The pictures are always gorgeous but check the size of plants you will be getting. It's disappointing when you look at the pictures and then get a plant that's barely 3 inches tall. Large plants are expensive and difficult to ship so expect small plants.

Check shipping dates. Most companies ship according to the seasons so if you order tulip bulbs in the spring they won't be shipped till fall. Some companies let you select when you want the item shipped, which is helpful. Companies based in cold climates often ship plants late for our climate. They can't ship when it's cold there even though we may be hot. Some companies may offer expedited shipping. It would cost more but it would mean that your plants will have less time on the road and a better chance of surviving the trip.

Check growing zone information. Some people have a talent for growing out-of-zone plants. Most of us don't though. For the best success stick with

continued on pg. 6

Yard birds

By Laurie Cameron



Yesterday afternoon as I sat reading a book, I heard the cheerful chatter of birds outside my patio door. I had opened it to let the fresh air in as my room had grown hot with the sun shining into it. I thought to myself, "are we really in January?" I glanced outside where the birds were chirping. It was so beautiful . . . and so dry.

Five years ago, when I began to landscape my yard, I chose mostly drought resistant, xeric plants. This year, after ten months with almost no measurable precipitation, the native grasses are wheat- and bronze colored. I chose not to deadhead the yarrow. They stand erect in dry silver clusters. The rosemary, still large and bushy, remains defiantly green. I could see the deep blue skies that we have



become accustomed to in Arizona stretch above a large pinion pine that borders our yard.

No one would argue that it's been a tough year. For me, as a

gardener, I remember sheltering at home well into the summer in the ghastly heat waiting for the monsoons to come. I had plans for the yard. I would divide my irises and spread them out into a few bare patches. I planted agave and euphorbia in parts of my yard that never get irrigated, counting on the monsoon rains to get them established. But it wasn't to be. As summer slid into fall, I waited, ever hopeful, for the winter rains to come and save these poor plants that might still have had a



chance to survive. But alas, it wasn't to be either.

But there is one small compensation. I have a small "bird bath" in our fenced-in back



yard consisting of a large drainage saucer meant to be used under a flowerpot. Every morning, the irrigation system refills it with fresh water (yes, I still run my irrigation system in these overly warm dry months). The bird life has been unbelievable. They have discovered this source of water and flock to the yard by the dozens. I am not a bird expert, but I suspect some of these

birds have taken up residence because of our mild winter and this steady source of water.

On a warm evening, my husband and I sit out on the west side of the house in our shirtsleeves with a glass of wine and watch a parade of birds gather and drink. They also seek out insects under the wood chips in areas where I have mulched and have continued to irrigate. I like to think I have contributed in one small way to help our wildlife where persistent dry conditions have led to a lack of substantial forage and low stock ponds and water catchments, potentially impacting livestock and wildlife.

Birds photos: TL Western Bluebird, Mid L Goldfinch, Lower L Robin, TR Western Bluebirds & Sparrow, Mid page Gray Vireo.

Continued from pg 5

plants that are suited to our climate and soils. Soils are not often mentioned in catalogs but it's worth understanding what a plant needs before purchasing.

With a bit of research and time you should be able to find reliable on-line nurseries with the plants you are craving. I think the biggest issue is to temper your expectations on the size of the plant you will receive but just think of the joy of nurturing that plant into its full glory.



Congratulations *for completing your first 50 hours*

Mark Kudlick — mentor is Bill Marmaduke.
Peggy Aronowitz — Mentor is Carol Keefer

The Tree from Hell

The Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) is a nuisance. It can be a beautiful tree except that it smells when blooming, is highly invasive and has concrete-busting roots. It pops up everywhere. It spreads from root sprouts, disperses millions of seeds and will grow almost anywhere. It is also a host for lanternfly. How many more ways are there to dislike it? It originally came from China around 240 years ago, brought by early botanists to add to their botanical collections and use as a shade tree. It was well-liked in areas like Jerome because the tree would grow even in soil that was contaminated by mining activity. The story goes that some well-meaning person took thousands of seeds up in a plane and flew over Jerome dropping the seeds hoping to get something to grow in the town. I do know people who swear it's true making Jerome a perfect place to see what a problem they are. There is hope on the horizon with a possible method of control. It's still in the testing stage but scientists have found a native fungus that can kill the tree. The fungus needs to be injected in the tree. There is still lots of work for scientists. Biological controls are difficult to assess. They know the fungus can kill the tree but don't know yet whether it will kill other trees. Will the fungus do more damage than good? Hard to tell yet but it's interesting news.

Yavapai Gardens Searches

Because the Yavapai Gardens newsletters are on our website as pdf files, they are not searchable. However, the specific horticulture topics found in each newsletter are now noted next to the newsletter link. Hopefully this will help if you are looking for a particular subject. Thank you Jo Graves and Kim Corcoran for compiling the data. <https://extension.arizona.edu/yavapai-gardens-newsletters>

2021 Newsletter Deadline Schedule

The newsletter comes out every two months. Please note the deadlines.

Publish Date	Deadline
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Feb-Mar—Feb 1	Articles Jan 5, announcements Jan 25
April-May—April 1	Articles March 5, announcements Mar 25
June-July—June 1	Articles May 5, announcements May 25
Aug-Sept—Aug 1	Articles July 5, announcements July 25
Oct-Nov—Oct 1	Articles Sept 5, announcements Sept 25
Dec-Jan—Dec 1	Articles Nov 5, announcements Nov 25

From the Editor: Send or email articles to the address below. Email is preferred. Please see schedule for deadlines.

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MG NEWSLETTER



Next Meetings

Still in Zoom mode for meetings, so read Mary Barnes emails to find out the latest in the meetings and other activities.

Upcoming Meeting
April 21: Program TBA

Ever hopeful that we can get together one of these days. Mark your calendar for the Recognition Picnic September 18 in Prescott.

Don't forget the Tomato sale in May!