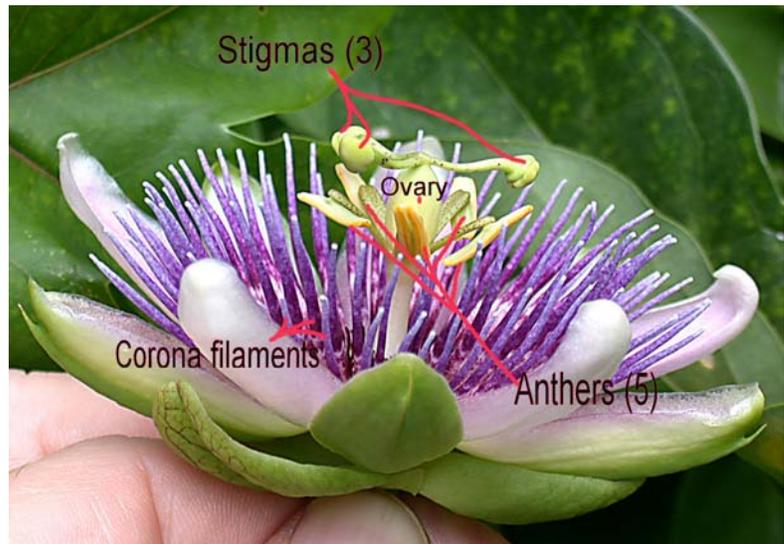


Passionflower Vines

Mike Malloy and Doug Caldwell

There are about 400 to 500 different species of this magnificent vine. The flower comes in many different colors and shapes ranging in size from ½ inch to 6 inches across. The origin of most passionflower vines is tropical regions such as South



America, Central America and Mexico. The one thing they all have in common is the unique and flashy arrangement of the flower parts which includes the: 3-stigma style (the top part which resemble a warped helicopter blade), petals, sepals and central flower column. [You can find wonderful pictures of the flowers with the parts labeled, if you go to Google and type passionflower, then go to the link with www.microscopy-uk.org , the full length of this URL requires too much space here!] Some priests and early missionaries liked to use the complex flower parts to teach about the different elements in the crucifixion and Christ's resurrection, hence the name "passion" vine or "passion" flower". For details see: <http://www.passiflora-uk.co.uk/passion-flower-story.shtml>

Passionflower vines are great climbing plants because of the use of their tendrils, which they use to wrap and hold onto anything they come in contact with. Arbors and trellises are perfect supports for these wonderful vines.

Flowers appear on and off all year long here in southwest Florida. Passionflower vines grow in sun or partial shade and require very little care once established.

One of the best parts and the bonus you get by planting passion vines is they are the host plants (plants female butterflies seek out to deposit their eggs on) for three of Florida's most beautiful butterflies, zebra, gulf fritillary and the Julia. The females of these species can detect their host plants from quite a distance and will seek out your garden where these plants are growing. Don't worry about the caterpillars eating them, it actually is the best pruning they can get. They will flush out quickly better than ever. In some cases when very successful in butterfly gardening, you may need to plant an additional passion vine to accommodate the number of caterpillars you have. Remember the passion vine is the lifeline to these three Florida heliconian butterflies. Their caterpillars will not eat any other plant species.

The best ways to grow passions vines are planting them on fences, trellises, arbors or trees, anything they can hook onto with their tendrils and thrust skyward.

Lady Margaret passionflower is one of the most beautiful. Crimson in color and the center looks like it has blue fiber optics. It is a constant bloomer and is one of the slower growing. Flowers are about 2 ½ to 3 inches in size. The dark green leaves of this plant have three lobes.



Corky-stem or *P. suberosa* passionflower vine is a native plant, but this one can be very invasive with seedlings popping up everywhere. The flowers are white and very insignificant. Flowers are, at tops, one inch in diameter. The vine(below) can become a surprising one inch or more in diameter with corky flakes.



Citrina passion vine

This is very showy even if the flowers are only a petite 1 inch blossom. They are bright yellow, star-shaped and bloom all year. This vine is a relatively slow and confined grower, very nice!



Passiflora Blue Bouquet

Very showy flower; can be 3 inches in size. Mixtures of purple blue and white make up the colors of this magnificent one.



There are vines with interesting bat-shaped leaves and variegated types as well. For more pics, see: <http://mgonline.com/passionvine.html>

Avoid planting the beautiful red flowering *P. coccinea* unless you have a lot of room. It is very aggressive and will grow 20 feet every which way in just a few years. Also the species mentioned are not known for producing edible fruit. If you desire edible fruit, you want *P. edulis* and there are many different varieties you can grow to produce your very own Hawaiian Punch!

Consider planting some passionflower vines as well as some nectar plants to help our zebra longwing populations. Over the years, maybe your backyard can have its own little cloud of black and yellow butterflies roosting under some shade trees for the night.



These caterpillars - larvae of the gulf fritillary (orange) and the zebra longwing (white-) will dine on passionflower vine and leave other plants alone.

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