



Billardiera longifolia (Purple Appleberry) offers an abundance of blossoms.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CLIMBER

Beyond Wisteria

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No plant does more to complete a garden than a vine. The vertical growth connects the garden floor to the trees and sky, and gives a sense of maturity to even a young garden. Vines make gardens feel full and lush because they take the edge off structures and can make a building appear to have been in place forever. More than any other type of plant, vines have universal appeal. And the icing on the cake — birds love to build nests in the elevated, protected shelter of vines.

How do you choose a vine? Besides knowing the amount of sun or shade the location receives, consider the growth

habit of the vine and how much area you want to cover. With forethought, a carefully chosen and well-placed climber can add immeasurable charm to the garden without a lot of care.

First off, think about whether you need an evergreen or deciduous vine. Deciduous vines are great for covering seating areas like pergolas because they provide summer shade and when bare in the winter, allow us to enjoy the sun when it's out. Evergreen vines are useful for covering things you might like to hide, like chain link fences, blocking unpleasant views or creating privacy screens.

Secondly, imagine the leaves, flowers, fruit or seed pods the vine might produce, not only for aesthetics but for clean up. Small leaves and flower petals are harder to clean up than larger leaves. For example, wisteria, with its many rows of small leaflets, charming carpet of fallen flowers and dangling seed pods, is best sited where these items are least likely to be tracked in the house and over solid surfaces like pavers or over the lawn, where they can be swept or raked. Fishing handfuls of small leaves from evergreen groundcovers or off gravel is tiresome work that a little planning can prevent. ►



Dutchman's Pipe (*Aristolochia durior*) is a lush looking deciduous vine whose large, heart-shaped leaves are easy to rake, even from a gravel driveway.

We all want vines that fill in quickly but overplanting can create more pruning work than is necessary. A single wisteria, spring blooming clematis or honeysuckle can cover a run of 30 or more feet in a

matter of a few seasons. To avoid overplanting a fence or screen, locate the vine in the center. The vine will grow in two directions, covering more space in less time. For most patio covers and arbors, planting a vine on each post is overkill. A single vine trained up one post and over the top of a structure will take two or three years, but then there will only

be one vine requiring care.

When deciding on a vine, consider if it will develop a trunk or woody base, or whether it will die back entirely. This is an important maintenance consideration, as one that dies back entirely will need to be completely retrained every year to avoid a tangled mess. For instance, summer blooming clematis forms a small, bare



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Above, Dutchman's Pipe (*Aristolochia durior*) is a perfect climber.

Left, *Wisteria floribunda* "Caroline" (Japanese Wisteria) loves full sun.



Dutchman's Pipe (*Aristolochia durior*)

COLLEEN'S FAVORITE VINES

Aristolochia durior

(Dutchman's Pipe) — sun or shade

Clematis montana

(Anemone Clematis) — roots in shade, top in sun

***Vitis vinifera* "Purpurea"**

(Purpleleaf Grape Vine) — full sun

Billardiera longifolia

(Purple Appleberry) — part sun

Akebia quinata

(Five Leaf Akebia) — part sun to full shade

***Wisteria floribunda* "Caroline"**

(Japanese Wisteria) — full sun

Vines make gardens feel full and lush because they take the edge off structures and can make a building appear to have been in place forever.

main trunk and flower on the ends of the new growth sent out from that trunk every spring. The flowers are spectacular, but its tidy appearance depends on training new growth in the spring and summer and pruning off the dead growth from the previous year each winter. For this reason, it is best on a detailed metal trellis or low fence on which it can readily climb, but is also easy to reach. You'll also want those gorgeous flowers at eye level.

If you're looking for a smaller vine to cover a decorative trellis of the type often sold in garden centers, hunt down *Billardiera longifolia* (Purple Appleberry). With a list of charms such as fine evergreen foliage, pale yellow flowers and purple berries, it needs little care and grows slowly.

Now that you've given some thought to what type of vine you want for that special spot in your garden, go to your local nursery and ask to see the selection. Run your ideas by the nursery person to make sure you've chosen the right plant for the right spot, or ask nursery experts which vines are their favorite. Chances are you'll come home with the perfect climber and the inspiration to find room for another. ♦