

Passiflora incarnata Wild Passion Flower, Maypop¹

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Introduction

Maypop is undoubtedly the showiest of the native *Passiflora* species. It is an evergreen, flowering vine that climbs by tendrils. Its height and spread varies depending on the structure it climbs on. The flower is a spectacular pink and purple and generally reaches a width of 3 to 5 inches. Each unique flower lasts about one day, appearing in the summer and early fall. The flowers fill the plant, making maypop a fine flowering plant for most of Florida. The leaves have three lobes and smooth margins. Ovoid, green fruits are abundantly produced and can be found on the vine along with the flowers. Fruits are light weight and the flesh is spongy and white. They are attractive and edible (but not very tasty) and attain a diameter of 2 ½ to 3 inches.

General Information

Scientific name: *Passiflora incarnata*

Pronunciation: pass-siff-FLOR-ruh in-kar-NAY-tuh

Common name(s): wild passion flower, maypop

Family: *Passifloraceae*

Plant type: vine

USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 11 (Fig. 1)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: attracts butterflies; attracts hummingbirds; cascading down a wall

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant



Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: odd-pinnately compound

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: parallel; pinnate

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Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink; purple

Flower characteristic: summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: green

Fruit characteristic: suited for human consumption

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: moderate

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Maypop can be supported on a fence, trellis, or arbor. Members of this genus are often grown for their attraction to butterflies. Try this one for a nice addition to your native landscape. Fertilize two or three times each year to maintain vigorous growth.

Passion flowers are drought tolerant and can be grown in different soils. They can be found growing close to the beach on other shrubs and small trees in north and central

Florida. This plant does require a position in the landscape that receives full sun for best flowering.

There are at least five other native species of *Passiflora* in Florida: *lutea*, *multiflora*, *pallens*, *sexflora*, and *suberosa*. *Passiflora incarnata* is by far the most showy with pink and purple 4-inch-wide flowers appearing in the warm months. Although its natural range extends only slightly into south Florida, it can probably be grown in most of south Florida with little trouble. In most cases, this plant would be preferable over introduced species such as *Passiflora foetida* which has become invasive in Palm Beach County and is spreading.

The wild passion flower is propagated by seeds or cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

Nematodes can be a serious problem.

Caterpillars slow growth by eating foliage.