

Combretum fruticosum Orange Flame Vine¹

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Introduction

Delicate orange flowers borne in the axil of the opposite, simple leaves put on a spectacular show in the early part of the warm summer months (Fig. 1). The flowering period can be extended into the fall in some years. Good growing conditions in partial to full sun results in dense foliage growth with flowers borne on the tips of new growth. Shoots can extend several feet from the fence or other structure supporting the vine. Plan on this when locating the vine since regular clipping will remove the flowers.



Figure 1. Orange flame vine.

General Information

Scientific name: *Combretum fruticosum*

Pronunciation: kom-BREE-tum froo-tick-KOE-sum

Common name(s): orange flame vine

Family: *Combretaceae*

Plant type: vine

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: trained as a standard; espalier

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: 10 to 20 feet

Plant habit: spreading; round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

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Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)
Leaf venation: pinnate
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: orange
Flower characteristic: summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: unknown
Fruit color: unknown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: reddish
Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Orange flame vine can also be grown as a loose shrub, becoming at least 10 to 15 feet wide and 6 to 8 feet tall. It can be planted 5 to 8 feet apart to form a solid mass within a couple of years after planting. It makes a good soil stabilizer for steep slopes.

Supply the plant with regular irrigation during dry weather to maintain good growth and flowering. Periodic fertilization during the year also helps keep the plant in flower. Other species exist including *Combretum grandiflorum* which has red flowers and reddish new growth.

Pests and Diseases

No major insect or disease problems are known to affect the plant at this time.