

# *Passiflora incarnata* Wild Passion Flower, Maypop<sup>1</sup>

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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.