

# ***Senecio confusus* Mexican Flame Vine<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Introduction**

This twining, evergreen sprawling vine has 4 inch long, coarsely toothed, dark green leaves and terminal clusters of orange-red, one-inch, daisy-like flowers with golden centers. Although it appears throughout the year, peak periods of bloom are spring and summer. The quick growth of Mexican flame vine is ideal to add interest to palm trunks, to soften fences, or to veil a trellis. Occasional heading helps some foliage and flowers at the bottom of a fence or other structure supporting Mexican flame vine. Left unpruned, foliage and flowers accumulate at the top.



Figure 1. Full Form - *Senecio confusus*: Mexican Flame Vine  
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf - *Senecio confusus*: Mexican Flame Vine  
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 3. Flower - *Senecio confusus*: Mexican Flame Vine  
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

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## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Senecio confusus*

**Pronunciation:** sen-NEESH-shee-oh kun-FEW-sus

**Common name(s):** Mexican flame vine

**Family:** *Asteraceae*

**Plant type:** ground cover

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10 through 11 (Figure 4)

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** native to North America

**Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant

**Uses:** ground cover; cascading down a wall

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



Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** depends upon supporting structure

**Spread:** depends upon supporting structure

**Plant habit:** spreading

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** medium

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** dentate

**Leaf shape:** ovate

**Leaf venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** orange-red

**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** oval

**Fruit length:** less than 0.5 inch

**Fruit cover:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** brown

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

## 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 part shade/part sun

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

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Soil salt tolerances:** poor

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

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

## Use and Management

Easily grown in full sun or partial shade, Mexican flame vine thrives in any soil with little care. Although knocked down by frost, it will quickly recover in USDA hardiness zones 8b and 9. Growth rate is so rapid, it can be used as an annual vine, planting yearly in areas subjected to freezing winter temperatures.

The cultivar 'Sao Paulo' has deeper orange, almost brick red flowers.

Propagation is by seed or stem cuttings. The green, fleshy stems will root at the nodes when in contact with soil.

## Pests and Diseases

Nematodes, mites, scales, and caterpillars all bother Mexican flame vine.

No diseases are of major concern.