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Vines, 07-09-15

Vines are a group of landscape plants that we often overlook when planning our landscapes. Vines can be used to block unattractive views, to provide blooms, or to provide food and cover for wildlife. Consider the following list of vines for your central and south Texas landscape.

Crossvine is an evergreen plant with dark green leaves that will cover a six to 10-foot fence to block an unattractive view. Grow it in full sun and in the spring it will be covered with rust-red tubular blooms that are a favorite of hummingbirds. A few flowers appear throughout the year. “Tangerine Beauty,” is a superior variety with a richer tangerine-colored bloom. Crossvine is a good xeriscape plant, but unfortunately, the deer will eat it.

Butterfly vine is another evergreen vine to consider. It is less dense as a covering for a fence than crossvine, but has a showier bloom production. Its yellow flowers appear steadily through the summer and then form green seedpods that look like butterflies. It is drought-tolerant and deer do not eat it in most neighborhoods. Butterfly vine does fairly well in reduced-sun situations.

Carolina Jessamine has glossy green, evergreen foliage. A single plant covers less area than crossvine or butterfly vine. The waxy, yellow, fragrant flowers appear in early spring. Carolina jessamine forms a leaning mass rather than an attached covering so sometimes it can fall off a fence or structure. Deer do not eat it and Carolina jessamine has more shade tolerance than most of the other vines. It is also drought-tolerant.

Climbing roses are deciduous vines that can cover a large fence or trellis very quickly. The blooms on selections such as “Old Blush” or “New Dawn” are spectacular in the spring and early summer. In my experience, climbing roses in the San Antonio area do not require pesticide sprays or supplemental irrigation. Pruning back the thorny stems every year is an unpleasant task.

Climbing roses can make your fence an impenetrable barrier if security is a goal. They bloom best in full sun. Climbing roses are very aggressive but deer will eat them.

Other vines that are available are coral vine, trumpet creeper, cat’s claw (yellow honeysuckle) and passion vine. Some can be a problem because of their inclination to grow fast, high, and far. Visit plantanswers.com for more information before you introduce any vines into your landscape.