

Grow the Heck UP!

Embellish Your Garden with Vines

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Vines Frequently Grown in the PNW

Akebia Boston Ivy Clematis
Climbing Hydrangea Climbing Rose Honeysuckle
Passion Flower Trumpet Vine Wisteria

Problems with Vines

No backbone
Many are Aggressive
Ugly legs
Leaf problems, especially some evergreen vines

Then Why Grow Them?

Add a sense of joy to the garden by leading the eye up
Maximize growing space by filling unused vertical space
Make garden seem richer and bigger
Provide plants with more air, sun, and visibility
Add color, texture, and dimension
Soften stark lines
Frame doors, windows, views, focal points
Create screens for privacy, separating garden rooms,
 hiding unsightly areas
Have varied forms as well as varied directions of
 growth, including horizontal, upward, and even
 downward as in hanging baskets and window boxes

Modes of Attachment

Important for determining what to grow vines on and how to prune them.

Clingers

Boston Ivy, Climbing Hydrangea, English Ivy, Trumpet Vine, Virginia Creeper

Hookers

Climbing Roses and Bougainvillea

Twiners by leaf stem

Clematis and Purple Bell Vine (Rhodochiton)

Twiners by tendril

Passion Flower, Sweet Pea

Twiners by growing tip

Akebia, Honeysuckle, Wisteria

General Tips about Pruning Vines

Hard to kill a vine by pruning
Vines don't give a hoot when or what you prune—they just want to GROW!
Prune out the 4 Ds—dead, damaged, diseased, and deranged (growing the wrong way)
Overgrown vines can be radically renovated
Pruning Information is a **guideline** to help you contain the plant, keep it healthy, and maximize blooms

Pruning Clingers

Clingers grip to a flat surface like a fence or wall or to the bark of a large tree with small rootlets, suction cups, or sticky tendrils. **To prune clingers**, in early spring cut back beyond where you want them to grow, staggering cuts for a more natural look. Tug cut vines away from surface. **Includes:** Boston Ivy, Climbing Hydrangea, English Ivy (noxious weed!), Trumpet Vine, Virginia Creeper.

Pruning Hookers

Hookers have a little bit of a backbone and, in nature, can use their thorns to help attach them to something stronger. In home gardens, tie into structure. **Includes:** Bougainvillea (not hardy here) and climbing roses.

Example: Climbing Roses

Remove one or two of the oldest canes to the ground every year or two to promote vigor. Cut remaining canes back by up to one third, if desired. Cut the laterals (side branches) to 3-6 inches. For better blooming, tie canes into support horizontally or even downward to thwart apical dominance, whereby the top bud sends a hormone down the stem via gravity that suppresses growth in the side branches, resulting in fewer blooms. In summer, cut back any laterals or canes that get in the way or go where they shouldn't.

Pruning Twiners by Leaf Stem

Vines that climb by leaf stems need something no bigger than your baby finger to climb on. Otherwise, they expend their energy looking for something to cling to instead of growing and blooming. **Includes:** Clematis and Purple Bell Vine (Rhodochiton)

Example: Clematis

To simplify pruning guidelines, clematis are divided into three pruning groups according to whether they bloom on old or new growth and when they bloom.

Pruning Group A or 1

Early small-flowered clematis that bloom before June on old growth—most have small blooms on large plants. No pruning required—until they get too big and unwieldy. Then prune right after they bloom to maximize blooms next year. If unconcerned about next year's bloom, prune any time. If the clematis is a huge tangle of vines, give it a radical renovation (cut back hard) right after blooming.

Pruning Group B or 2

Early large-flowered bloomers that bloom on old growth with the main flush being between early May and mid-June. Can be helpful to first remove all the old leaf stems (small hooked side branches on the vines). Then prune the actual vines lightly, working from the top down. Cut each stem back to the first healthy green bud and tie back into support.

Pruning Group C or 3

Everything else (blooming on new growth from about mid-June to early fall). Prune hard (one to three feet from the ground) any time between late fall and early spring. If colder than Zone 7, wait until spring.

Summer Pruning of Clematis

Cut individual clematis (actually, any vine) back if:

1. Vines wander too far or in the wrong direction.
2. One or more stems succumb to wilt.
3. A flush of blooms is over and you want to encourage reblooming (also water and fertilize at this time).
4. Leaves or flowers are scalded by sun or heat or whitened by powdery mildew (will regrow fresh new leaves and may even rebloom given time).
5. An old stem fails.

If you don't know the pruning group, prune only lightly and make note of the size and timing of blossoms to determine pruning group.

Pruning Twiners by Tendrils

They use modified leaf stems called tendrils to climb.

Example: Passion Flower Vine

First, develop a permanent structure by choosing two or three vines to be the framework. Tie them in and cut everything else away. Always maintain the framework when pruning, because a sturdy framework promotes more blossoms. In late winter on established plants, remove the dead, damaged, diseased, and deranged vines. Cut the rest (except for the established framework) back by at least 1/3.

In summer after main bloom, if you wish you can twine a few new whips around the main stems to keep the plant tidy. Cut off everything else.

Pruning Twiners by Growing Tips

Includes: Akebia, Honeysuckle, Kiwi and Wisteria.

Example: Wisteria (Latin for WORK!)

Train a young vine: tie one or two individual vines that you want to use to establish a sturdy framework to a strong structure (such as a fence post or the front of a porch) and cut everything else away. When the vine reaches the height you want, cut it. Don't worry, new vines will grow. Keep only those stems that you can tie along your structure (say the top of a fence or the rail of a porch), creating more of the sturdy framework. Cut a few vines back to about 6 inches to set up flower spurs. Cut everything else that is not part of your structure off.

Summer Pruning: Cut out all new whips (with leaves but no flowers) all summer, maybe even every week—maybe even more. Remove about 95% of vine every year. In summer the whips are small and flexible; later they will be woody, twined around other branches, or working their way where they are not wanted, therefore difficult to cut.

Winter Pruning: cut all the whips you haven't already cut back to the framework, except for a few that can be cut to 6 inches to become flower spurs.

Then start all over again.

Excellent Annual Vines

(Available at good local nurseries by late May)

Black-Eyed Susan Vine (*Thunbergia alata*)
Chilean Glory Vine (*Eccremocarpus scaber*)
Canary Bird Vine (*Tropaeolum peregrinum*)
Cypress Vine (*Ipomoea quamoclit*)
Morning Glories (*Ipomoea*)
Purple Bell Vine (*Rhodochiton*)
Scarlet Runner Bean (*Phaseolus coccineus*)
Sweet Pea (*Lathyrus odoratus*).

Vines for Shade

Akebia
Boston Ivy
Chinese Wisteria
Clematis (pastel colors only)
Climbing Hydrangea
Trumpet Vine
Virginia Creeper

Vines for Dry Areas

Clematis (only a few—Jackmanii,
Polish Spirit, tanguitica)
Hall's Honeysuckle (Lonicera
japonica—can be invasive!)
Roses
Trumpet Vine
Wisteria

Vines for Clay Soil

Boston Ivy
Kiwi
Trumpet Vine
Virginia Creeper

Questions? Email me at LBWLSS@comcast.net, or visit my blog at www.clematisinseattle.com