

Climbing HIGH

STORY MELANIE REKOLA

VINING PLANTS ARE PRETTY REMARKABLE – THEY DO AN AMAZING JOB OF EDITING OUT THE GARDEN UGLY. HAVE A DREADFUL SHED, FOUL FENCE OR NEED SOME SCREENING FROM NEIGHBOURS' UNSIGHTLY GARBAGE PILE? THERE'S A VINE TO FIX THAT!

Every garden could be better with the addition of a vine, as vines do what other plants cannot. For example, sometimes you need a tall green textural backdrop but don't have the width to accommodate a tree. This is where vines can shine. Vines can also become a beautiful focal point when trained on an arbour or around a doorway. To walk through an arbour concealed by green climbers feels like walking into an alternate realm. It's a truly magical experience. But all that gorgeous magic aside, it's their vining, twining, climbing (and even strangling) nature that can make vines scary for some. That's where choosing the right vine for the right place is vital.

BOSTON IVY (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*)

You're probably already familiar with this vine from imagery of buildings at American Ivy League universities covered in Boston ivy; it's where the nickname Ivy League came from. This ivy has a nice tight-and-tidy habit with leaves that open reddish, turn green in summer then revert back to red in fall. It attaches to vertical walls easily and forms a dense screen. Contrary to popular belief, Boston ivy doesn't degrade brickwork but actually protects it from the elements, assuming your brickwork is intact and in good shape to begin with. Yes, you eventually will have to cut it out yearly from around your windows and soffits but beauty almost always takes some effort, doesn't it?

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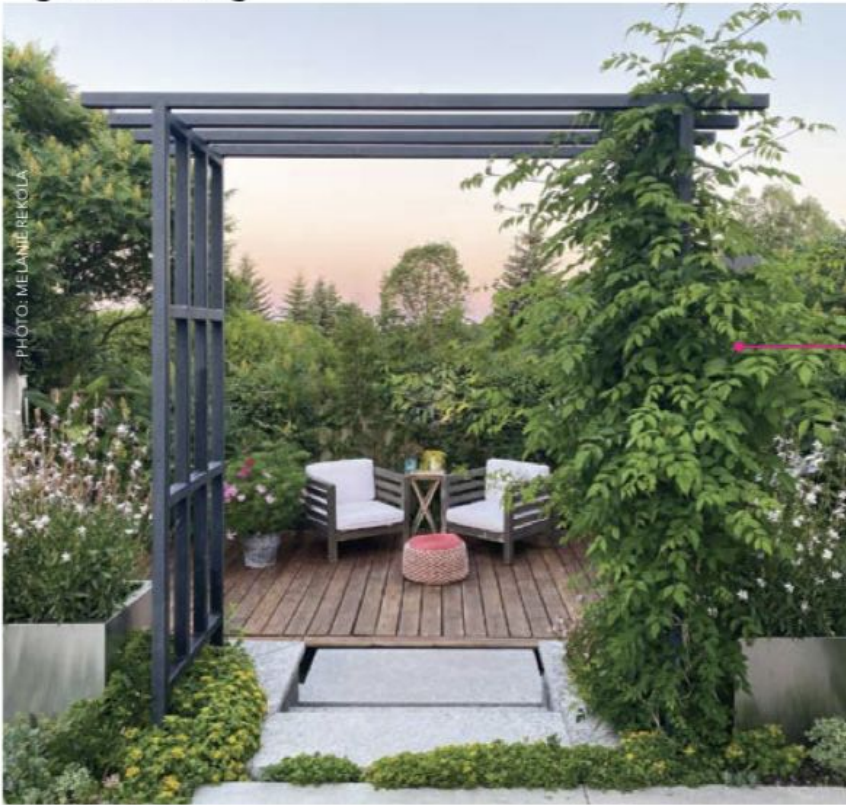


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←
Trumpet Vine
in bloom

TRUMPET VINE (*Campsis radicans*)

The trumpet vine is extremely long-blooming with gorgeous orange trumpet-shaped blossoms adored by bees and hummingbirds alike. It has lovely lacy leaves and a strong twining habit that requires a sturdy support. This beauty is extremely vigorous and will strangle any tree or shrub if planted too close. It often suckers, too, so it's best to plant in a contained area. It can take time to really get growing and takes some years before blooms appear but it's so rewarding for those who are patient.

CLIMBING HYDRANGEA (*Hydrangea anomala ssp. petiolaris*)

Everyone loves hydrangea, and it even comes in a vine form. This striking beauty clings to vertical walls with ease but prefers a shady spot. It's slow to grow and bloom, but once it does you'll be graced with huge white blossoms sure to attract many neighbourhood gawkers.



CLEMATIS

Delicate clematis boasts blossoms in all kinds of shapes and colours – there really is one for every taste. Its moderate coiling habit requires a slim support and some help and training to get this gentle beauty off to the right start. Various varieties require different pruning and care, so read those labels carefully when choosing.



DUTCHMAN'S PIPE (*Aristolochia macrophylla*)

Generally grown for its huge heart-shaped leaves, this vigorous, fast-growing twiner requires a robust support to grow and look its best.



If planting permanent vines is just too scary to consider, there are quite a few lovely annual vines that require no commitment. All that's needed is a lightweight trellis, some inexpensive seeds and some watering care in the initial stages. A few of my favorites to sow directly in the garden after danger of frost are: scarlet runner bean, morning glory, moon flower, sweet pea and nasturtium. Go get your vine on. **OH**

Melanie is a certified horticulturalist and landscape designer.