

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Perennial favorites!

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Bower Vine:

This is the most perfect flowering evergreen vine for pergolas, arbors, and trellises. Grow bower vine over awnings, around windows and doors, or as a gate climber. It is easy to care for, doesn't invade a roof or siding, and is a swift grower. Blooming throughout spring, summer and fall, flowers are pink and white with deep-throated trumpets attractive to hummingbirds. I grow bower vines in full sun and partial shade. Once established they don't require much water while providing year-round beauty with their shiny green leaves. Prune whenever the vine needs a bit of TLC as this vine is not fussy. Cut stems to add to indoor arrangements.

Crape Myrtle:

The crape myrtle is hands-down one of my very favorite specimens because of its beauty and interest in every season. In summer the bush or tree is covered in showy flowers, in fall the leaves change to gorgeous red, umber and gold, in winter the leaves fall off showcasing beautiful bark, and in spring the shiny green leaves sprout. All crape myrtles bloom on new wood and come in colors that include watermelon, red, white, pink, lavender and purple. I prune my purple shrubs in early winter to 12 inches from the ground and by summer they have grown to 3 feet high. Prune trees periodically to keep them shaped. Although crape myrtles prefer acidic soil, they will grow in sand, clay or loam. The Chinese Lagerstroemia indica crape myrtle is prone to powdery mildew so look for a cross with the Japanese L. fauriei to enjoy glorious blooms, attractive bark, and leaves without any issues. They are drought resistant, too!

Crocosmia:

This firecracker plant boasts a tropical origin with bright blazing orange, yellow and red flowers that light up the summer garden. In our region, they start blooming right in time for the fireworks of Independence Day and continue until autumn. Their sword-like foliage offers spiky interest to the landscape. Hummingbirds and butterflies are especially attracted to the trumpet-shaped blooms while deer and rabbits stay away. The corms naturalize and the stalks make excellent floral displays. After the flowers are spent, the seedpods provide additional appeal.

Daylily:

Sometimes called "ditch weed," daylilies will grow anywhere! Their botanical name is Hemerocallis from the Greek word hemera meaning day and kallos meaning beauty. They tolerate every kind of soil, are extremely low-maintenance, and require minimal irrigation once established. They are not a true lily as they have fleshy roots as opposed to bulbs. The leaves grow from a crown and the flowers form on a leafless stem called a "scape." Most do not self-sow. Divide the roots every three to five years to create more plants. Each flower blooms for only a day, but each scape will have a dozen or more buds that will continue to open. A variety of colors and shades are available with butter yellow being the most ubiquitous. Every part of the daylily is edible. Sauté the buds in butter, garlic, and a little white wine for a delicious veggie treat that tastes like asparagus mixed with peas.

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The pink bower vine is the perfect vine for everywhere!



A purple shrub crape myrtle begins to bloom.