

# Using Vines

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Hops (*Humulus lupulus*) yes the one used for making beer can also be a landscaping plant. This vine (technically a bine) can grow over twenty feet a year is zone rated around four. There are many varieties of hops to choose from. They need help trellising so tying them to most any structure will do. They like full sun and will do better with a lower pH level. The hop flower on the female plant is quite showy resembling a small green pinecone. So if you want flowers you will need to plant a male plant along with several female plants. Most varieties come from Europe, however even Wyoming has some native hops. Hops do not really suffer from insects or diseases, and in late fall or early spring just cut the stems back to ground level.

Another option to consider is the perennial sweet pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*). They produce showy, pink to white pea flowers, starting in June through September. This vine will need support if grown vertically itself on whatever structure is available or it can be left to grow over a rock wall or could become a ground cover. This vine also prefers full sun and has a zone rating of three. Once these vines are established they are somewhat drought tolerant.

A climbing hydrangea (*Hydrangea anomala*) can add a very showy white color display with blooms over six inches wide, which most pollinators will like. This vine has those aerial rootlets which gives it the ability to climb vertically. This could be the winner in growth per year with 50 feet being described in the literature, but have not seen it in Wyoming. Although it is rated for zone four, this vine may also require some winter pruning to keep it in check. If you have a wall that needs some color this would be a good candidate. This vine likes full sun, however it can do well in partial shade.

What about adding an edible vine? There is a hardy Kiwi (*Actinidia arguta*) zone rated four. This hardy Kiwi is a fast growing woody vine which produces a small edible fruit similar to the larger ones found in grocery stores. This vine can reach 20 feet and would need some kind of supporting trellis or other structure to give it a vertical stance. A fence would be a good candidate for this plant. Kiwi also needs a male plant to go with the female plants in order to have fruit. Kiwi will be happy with full sun.

Most vines particularly the ones mentioned above will need regular watering and will benefit with the regular addition of gypsum or sulfur several times a year to help lower the pH of the soil. There are many reasons to grow vines, particularly on structures. Vines can add color, texture and can have benefits such as attracting pollinators or providing fruit. A trellis system can be placed to help block the wind, provide screening from the neighbors or provide shade to a patio area. Vines can be used where horizontal space is limited or for providing

boundaries between spaces or transition zones. The vines themselves can also be cut and used for decorating inside. So when thinking about what you can add to your landscape plans consider a vine.

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