



STEPHEN & KRISTIN PATEGAS

in the garden *by Stephen and Kristin Pategas*

Got Vines?

Vines – can't live without them and sometimes it's hard to live with them. They sure are prolific. They provide cucumbers, those fuzzy kiwis, thirst quenching watermelons, pumpkins, pole beans, snap peas and more. Grapes, which grow on vines, produce the vast majority of the world's wines. For that reason alone vines get our thumbs-up.

In the garden they also provide functional and ornamental services. Vines fill many roles, often going where no other type of plant can go. In narrow planting areas against walls, they climb to fill a trellis and shade the wall. Grown overhead on a pergola they filter the harsh rays of the sun. If it's a deciduous vine, the warming rays during the winter shine through to warm

the bones. At ground level they creep and crawl to cover the ground barely above the height of a lawn, or in a low water use garden – to replace it.

Many vines create breathtakingly beautiful blossoms and as they climb, they display color at and above eye-level. Passion vine, cross vine, butterfly vine and flame vine are all candidates for visual overload. Stranded up in the breeze, the fragrant flowers of the confederate, pink bud or shining jasmines release their scents.

While the produce they generate, the roles they fill and the beauty they create is greatly appreciated; it's vines' vigorous growth in our garden during the growing months that gives us pause. Vines do not grow to a predetermined height or spread. In the tropics they are called lianas (woody climbing vine) and must ascend tree



Vitis 'Southern Home' has attractive foliage and edible grapes.

trunks soaring to astounding heights to reach the life giving sunlight above the dense tree canopies. Vines are programmed to climb and run. So in our garden, it's up to us to determine their limits. Given that they know no bounds, fertilizing a vine to encourage more growth is like requesting an audit from the Internal Revenue Service. It's bound to cause angst. Only feed a vine if there is an obvious lack of vigor. Remember to patrol regularly for the randomly appearing invasive skunk or potato vines and the too vigorous to be believed native Virginia creeper. Oh, and pull all of the roots from any of these fiends.

With the return of warm weather and summer rains, our collection of eight vines thriving on trellises, a pergola and along the ground have taken off again hoping we will look the other way. Our solution during the growing months is to stroll through the garden with a glass of wine in one hand and a hand pruner in the other. Tendrils beware! ■



Flame vine/ Pyrostegia venusta is a show stopper.



The Southern Home grape vine shades our arbor during the warm months.



Fragrant Confederate jasmine graces a pair of trellises at Hortus Oasis.

Hortus Oasis (FL26000315) in Winter Park is a boutique garden design company specializing in residential, commercial and specialty gardens. Stephen is a registered landscape architect and Kristin is a certified landscape designer. Contact them at 407-622-4886/garden@hortus oasis.com

All photography by Stephen G. Pategas/Hortus Oasis