

***Passiflora edulis* Passion Fruit¹**

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Introduction

Passion fruit is an evergreen, flowering vine from Brazil that climbs by tendrils (Fig. 1). Its height and spread varies depending on the structure it climbs on. The flower is a nice purple and white and generally reaches a width of 3 to 5 inches. Each unique flower lasts about one day, appearing in the summer and early fall. The showy fruit grows 2 1/2 to 3 inches long and is edible and often used in juices. It is quite tasty and is occasionally served fresh. The evergreen leaves are deeply cut into three lobes with entire margins.

General Information

Scientific name: *Passiflora edulis*

Pronunciation: pass-siff-FLOR-ruh ED-yoo-liss

Common name(s): passion fruit

Family: *Passifloraceae*

Plant type: vine

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)



Figure 1. Passion fruit

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Uses: screen; attracts butterflies; attracts hummingbirds; cascading down a wall

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: lobed

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: palmate; pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: purple, white

Flower characteristic: summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: yellow

Fruit characteristic: suited for human consumption

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Passion fruit can be supported on a fence, trellis or arbor. Fertilize two or three times each year to maintain vigorous growth.

Passion fruit is moderately drought tolerant and can be grown in different soils. This plant does require a position in the landscape that receives full sun for best flowering and fruit production. *Passiflora alatocaerulea* is widely planted, and forms no fruit. There are many other exotic or introduced *Passiflora* species grown in tropical climates.

There are at least six native species of *Passiflora* in Florida, incarnata, lutea, multiflora, pallens, sexflora, and suberosa. *Passiflora incarnata* is by far the most showy with pink and purple 4-inch-wide

flowers appearing in the warm months. Although its natural range extends only slightly into south Florida, it can probably be grown in most of south Florida with little trouble. In most cases, this plant would be preferable over introduced species such as *Passiflora foetida*, which has become invasive in Palm Beach County and is spreading.

Passion fruit is propagated by seeds or cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

Nematodes can be a serious problem. Caterpillars slow growth by eating foliage.