

Climbers

Wonderfully versatile, climbers can be used to add height to a garden, soften the lines of buildings and boundary walls and fences, provide shade or left to scramble on a bank. Our favourite climbers all have a season of glory – long or short – when they flower.

Evergreen Climbers

Clematis armandii – the evergreen Clematis produces 2-3cm long white, fragrant flowers against a backdrop of long, dark-green leaves in March or April

Clematis armandii ‘Apple Blossom’ – this evergreen Clematis produces abundant, fragrant, pink-tinted white flowers against a backdrop of long, dark-green leaves in March or April

Trachelospermum jasminoides – the Star Jasmine is another superb, fragrant evergreen climber bearing pure-white, fragrant flowers from mid to late summer. The dark-green leaves turn bronze in winter. Needs a protected site.

Deciduous Climbers

Actinidia chinensis ‘Jenny’ – self-pollinating Kiwi fruit – a large climber, but a space-saving one as until self-pollinating Kiwi vines came along it was necessary to grow 1 male for every 2 or more female plants. Needs a protected site.

Aristolochia marcophylla – the Pipe Vine is a twining plant bearing heart-shaped green leaves and unusual green flowers mottled with brown, purple and yellow – a striking plant. Needs a protected site.

Hydrangea petiolaris – the Climbing Hydrangea prefers partial shade to full sun, so is great for growing on shady or north-facing walls. It can take a few years to get into its stride, but it’s worth the wait as it’s smothered in white, lace-cap style Hydrangea flowers in midsummer. It sends out aerial roots and so is self-clinging.

Lonicera periclymenum ‘Belgica’ – this fragrant Honeysuckle is unfussy, enjoying heavy clay and light sandy soil though it prefers a neutral to alkaline soil

Schizophragma hydrangeoides ‘Roseum’ – a relative of the Hydrangea from China and Japan, producing slightly fragrant, lace-cap style flowers with pink outer bracts in midsummer. Best grown against a wall or fence, it self-clings using aerial roots. Prefers neutral to acid soil.

Vitis vinifera – the grape vine is another food-producing climber best grown against a fence or wall – ideally south-facing – and trained along wires strung between vine-eyes.

Wisteria sinensis (the Chinese Wisteria) and *Wisteria floribunda* (the Japanese Wisteria) – for us are the jewels of the botanical world – easy to grow, extremely long-lived, vigorous and magnificent when in flower. In late spring all varieties produce colourful cascades of fragrant flowers in whites, pinks and blues. We adore *W. floribunda* ‘Black Dragon’ with its intensely dark flowers and the white-flowered *W. floribunda* ‘Shiro-kapitan Fuji’ with its long, generous racemes. We also offer them trained into arches, roofs and umbrellas. *Wisteria sinensis* does not flourish on alkaline soils.

Climbing Roses

Roses certainly provide a season of glory. One of our favourites is the appropriately named *Rosa* ‘Gloire de Dijon’, a climbing hybrid tea rose producing large, heavily-scented, peach/copper/buff-

coloured flowers in high summer with some later repeat flowering. Vigorous, it needs ample room and adequate support from a sunny wall, fence or pergola.

For disease resistance we turn to *Rosa 'Queen Elizabeth'* and *Rosa 'Pierre de Ronsard'*, both pink and lightly-fragrant, the blooms of *R. 'Pierre de Ronsard'* fading to white as they age. Good on poorer soils and in partial shade and flowering continually from early summer to late autumn, few roses can beat *R. 'Pierre de Ronsard'*.