



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Hoya carnosa*¹

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Introduction

This slow-growing, woody, evergreen vine has thick, fleshy, two to four-inch-long, green or variegated leaves, and produces in spring and summer large, round, hanging clusters of creamy white to light pink, 0.5-inch, fragrant flowers, each with a perfect five-pointed pink star in the center (Fig. 1). Bloom fragrance is subtle and you must come close to the plant to enjoy it but it is well worth the effort. These long-lasting, showy blooms emerge on old flower spurs, which should never be pruned off. Because Wax Plant is especially sensitive to nematodes, plants are often grown in containers where the soil can be carefully controlled. Wax Plant is very susceptible to temperatures below 40-degrees F. and should be used in sheltered locations.

General Information

Scientific name: *Hoya carnosa*

Pronunciation: HOY-yuh kar-NOE-suh

Common name(s): Wax Plant, Wax Flower

Family: *Asclepiadaceae*

Plant type: vine

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: hanging basket; suitable for growing indoors; cascading down a wall

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

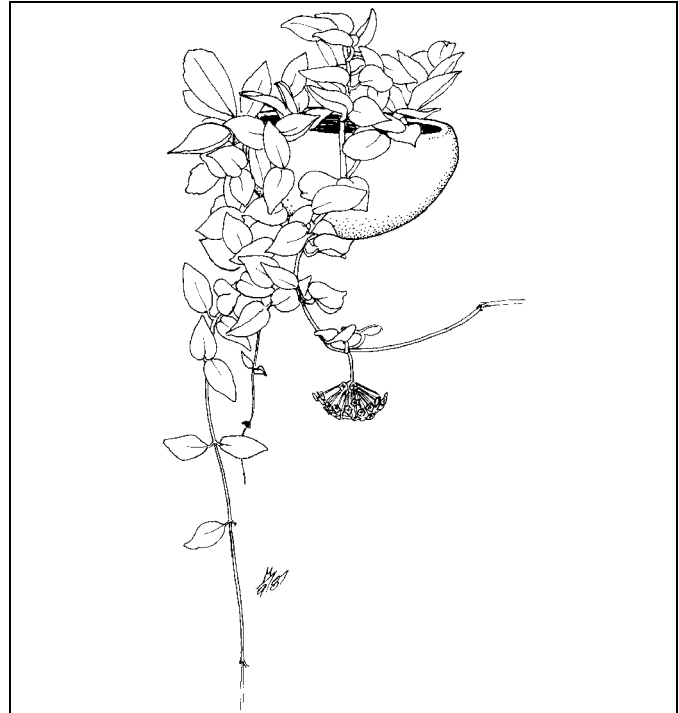


Figure 1. Wax Plant.

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: open

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** entire
- Leaf shape:** ovate
- Leaf venation:** pinnate; none, or difficult to see
- Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches
- Leaf color:** variegated
- Fall color:** no fall color change
- Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

- Flower color:** pink
- Flower characteristic:** pleasant fragrance; spring flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** pod or pod-like
- Fruit length:** less than .5 inch
- Fruit cover:** dry or hard
- Fruit color:** unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

- Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable
- Current year stem/twig color:** green
- Current year stem/twig thickness:** thick

Culture

- Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun
- Soil tolerances:** slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
- Drought tolerance:** high
- Soil salt tolerances:** poor
- Plant spacing:** 18 to 24 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: not known to be invasive

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

Use and Management

Wax Plant should be grown in partial shade in a fibrous, well-drained, acid potting medium, such as compost, peat, or sphagnum moss. Plants should be allowed to dry between deep waterings in the summer months then, after flowering, plants should be allowed to become dormant by very infrequent waterings during the cool months. This plant is well-suited for growing in a container with an extremely well-drained media where stems can cascade over the side and show off the waxy foliage and unusual bloom.

Available cultivars include: 'Variegata', white-margined leaves; 'Exotica', leaves variegated with yellow and pink, margined with green; and 'Krinkle Kurl' or Hindu-Rope Plant, leaves crowded, curled, and contorted.

Propagation is by cuttings or layering.

Nematodes and mealy-bugs.

Pests and Diseases

Root-rots if kept too wet.