



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Thunbergia fragrans*¹

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Introduction

Thunbergia fragrans is a vigorous, woody vine from India that has a variable height and width, depending on the size of the structure on which it is growing. This twining vine has small, triangular-ovate leaves that can have entire to finely toothed margins. They are a medium, soft green color and occur oppositely on the stems. The flowers of this vine are 1 1/4 inches long and may appear singly or in clusters. These lovely, fragrant blooms will occur in the summer, and they come in a number of colors: blue, lavender, yellow, or white. This plant produces rounded seed capsules that end in a beak. The gardener can use this vine on trellises, porches, and trees.

General Information

Scientific name: *Thunbergia fragrans*

Pronunciation: thun-BER-jee-uh FRAY-grunz

Common name(s): Sweet Clock Vine, White Thunbergia

Family: *Acanthaceae*

Plant type: vine

USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 1)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: cascading down a wall

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

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white; blue; yellow; lavender

Flower characteristic: pleasant fragrance; summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit cover: unknown

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

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Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: reddish

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; alkaline; sand; loam; clay;

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant

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

Use and Management

The Sweet Clock Vine should be grown in an area of the landscape that receives full sun to partial shade. It prefers well-drained soils and is moderately drought tolerant. Water this plant generously and protect it from strong winds. Use the Sweet Clock Vine carefully because it will run wild if it is not maintained with regular clipping.

Thunbergia fragrans is commonly propagated by cuttings or layers.

Pests and Diseases

Nematodes may be a problem for the Sweet Clock Vine.