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-jeuh-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.