Passiflora coccinea

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Introduction

Red Passion Flower is an evergreen, flowering vine from South America that climbs by tendrils (Fig. 1). Its height and spread varies depending on the structure it climbs on. The flower of Passiflora coccinea is a spectacular scarlet to deep orange color and generally reaches a width of 3 to 5 inches. Each unique flower lasts about one day appearing in the summer and early fall. They fill the plant making Passion Vine a fine flowering plant for central and south Florida. The evergreen leaves are obovate in shape and have doubly serrate margins. Fruits of Red Passion Flower are ovoid, orange or yellow in color, and are mottled green. They are attractive and edible and attain a diameter of 2 ½ to 3 inches.

General Information

Scientific name: Passiflora coccinea  
Pronunciation: pass-siff-FLOR-ruh kock-SIN-nee-uh  
Common name(s): Red Passion Flower, Passion Vine  
Family: Passifloraceae  
Plant type: vine  
USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)  
Planting month for zone 9: year round  
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round  
Origin: not native to North America  
Uses: attracts butterflies; attracts hummingbirds; cascading down a wall  
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant  

Figure 1. Red Passion Flower.

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure  
Spread: depends upon supporting structure  
Plant habit: spreading  
Plant density: dense  
Growth rate: fast  
Texture: medium
Passiflora coccinea -- Red Passion Flower

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: double serrate
Leaf shape: oblong
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: red
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 Vine can be supported on a fence, trellis or arbor. Members of this genus are often grown for their attraction to butterflies, but may escape cultivation and spread to surrounding landscapes. Fertilize two or three times each year to maintain vigorous growth.

Red Passion Flower 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.

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.

The Red Passion Flower is propagated by seeds or cuttings.

### Pests and Diseases

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