Butterfly Vine

Mascagnia macroptera

Height: 15 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9

Description:

A twining vine bearing dark green, linear leaves; features clusters of showy, yellow orchid shaped flowers in spring, with a second fall flowering; papery chartreuse seed pods turn tan, resembling green to brown butterflies; great for fences, trellises



Butterfly Vine flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Butterfly Vine foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Butterfly Vine features showy clusters of yellow orchid-like flowers at the ends of the branches from late spring to early summer. The fruits are showy chartreuse pods which fade to brown over time, which are carried in abundance from late summer to mid fall. It has green evergreen foliage. The narrow leaves remain green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Butterfly Vine is a multi-stemmed evergreen woody vine with a twining and trailing habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance woody vine, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Butterfly Vine is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Butterfly Vine will grow to be about 15 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. As a climbing vine, it tends to be leggy near the base and should be underplanted with low-growing facer plants. It should be planted near a fence, trellis or other landscape structure where it can be trained to grow upwards on it, or allowed to trail off a retaining wall or slope. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years.

This woody vine does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. This plant should not require much in the way of fertilizing once established, although it may appreciate a shot of general-purpose fertilizer from time to time early in the growing season. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America.

Butterfly Vine makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its spreading habit of growth, it is ideally suited for use as a 'spiller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the edges where it can spill gracefully over the pot. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.