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COLUMNS

Campbell Vaughn: Learn why you should, or should not, plant Confederate Jasmine

Campbell Vaughn Augusta Chronicle

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Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

Confederate jasmine is a fast-growing, fragrant, evergreen vine that attracts pollinators.

The plant's name refers to the Malay Confederacy, not the Confederate States of America.

Homeowners should carefully consider placement due to the vine's rapid and extensive growth.

I joke that there are no small vines. Mostly because the ones I see regularly can climb to the tallest trees in the forest and only stop because there is nowhere else to go. There is one out there now that is blooming up a storm, copiously fragrant and is very common in the landscape. It is called Confederate jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*) and is an aggressive evergreen woody vine that is often planted in areas it doesn't need to be planted.

If you are a fan of vines, this is a good one, but it is one with which you need to be careful. The positives for this climber include it being evergreen, insect and disease resistant, excellent late spring very fragrant bloomer that will attract pollinators and it grows fast. Confederate jasmine can handle salty conditions and is mostly deer resistant. I have seen it used as a ground cover as well as a trellis cover. Once this jasmine is established, it is tough to kill. It does well in the sun and shade. In the right place, it can make a very nice screen. If it attaches to a tree, it will climb all the way to the top.

I have a friend that has a Confederate jasmine. She loves how it climbs up the side of her chimney, but to maintain it you must get on a ladder and pull it out of the eaves, soffit, fascia, flue and off the shingles at least once a year if not more. That starts moving us into the negatives of Confederate Jasmine.

Confederate jasmine is not a small vine, but often gets treated like it is. So often I see it being planted to cover a mailbox. One established, it will not only cover the mailbox, but also will grow in the mailbox and get so thick that a flame thrower could barely keep it at bay. It is a good cover for a trellis to get some shade, but it would have to be a metal trellis. Since this vine is evergreen, the sun never has an opportunity to shine through. The vine will trap moisture and rot wood structures like fences, arbors and trellises and will most likely cause rusting on any metal structure to which it attaches itself. Some people love the smell of the fragrant white flowers the jasmine produces this time of year. I tend to think it is a bit strong.

The plant is native to Japan and Vietnam, so the reason it is called “Confederate” is not from U.S. history but from the Malay Confederacy which has to do with some old British settlements in the Far East.

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