



Wisteria frutescens

American Wisteria

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

Native* to wet forests and stream banks of the southeastern U.S., this climbing [vine](#) has richly colored, sweetly fragrant flowers, although not as dramatic or as rampant as its Asian cousins. The Virginia Native Plant Society selected American Wisteria as Wildflower of the Year for 2021.



Vine	Vine and Close-up of Flowers Opening
Height: 15–30 feet	 
Spread: 4–8 feet	
Bloom Color: Lavender, light violet-blue	
Characteristics	
Climbing, twining , woody deciduous vine	
Opposite pinnate leaves w/ 9–15 lanceolate leaflets	
Erect to pendant violet-blue racemes from April to August; flowers at raceme base bloom first	
Flat, smooth legumes develop after flowers fade and dehisce (split open) in fall	
Yellow to golden autumn foliage	
Smooth, gray-brown stems twine counterclockwise	
Attributes	Excellent Replacement for Wisteria floribunda - Japanese Wisteria W. sinensis - Chinese Wisteria
Tolerates drought, seasonal flooding; dislikes being transplanted; deer rarely damage	
Blooms on new wood when a few feet long; removing legumes encourages rebloom	
Seeds are poisonous to humans, cats, dogs, horses	
Attracts Lepidoptera , hummingbirds	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	
Soil Requirements : Slightly acidic, humus -rich	
Light Requirements : Sun, Partial Shade	
Water Requirements : Moist, Wet	
Flowers best in full sun	
Consult pruning guide on how to best train/shape vine; prune in spring, immediately after flowering	<p>*It is adventive (non-native, escaped from cultivation) in DE's Coastal Plain and endangered in PA where it is clustered mostly in the southwestern corner. In VA, <i>Wisteria frutescens</i> var. <i>frutescens</i> (American Wisteria) is rare in the southern and central Coastal Plain and southeast Piedmont and rare as an escape throughout. The introduced Midwest native <i>Wisteria frutescens</i> var. <i>macrostachya</i> (Mississippi Wisteria) is infrequent throughout the state although it is reported in Arlington and Fairfax counties. The <i>Flora of Virginia</i> notes that this variety may be invasive where found.</p>
Use as a climber on arbors, fences, posts, walls	
Hardiness : USDA Zones 5–9	
<i>developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria</i>	

Images by Elaine Mills (top) and Mary Free (bottom), Sunny Garden