

Vines

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Nothing beats vines for covering walls, garden structures or creating shade.

One type of vine that I find useful is the Thompson seedless grapevine. It grows at an astounding rate in the spring, and with the right care, it will cover up structures made of wire, rebar or wood. The Thompson vine will shed its leaves during the winter, allowing your patio or home to receive warm sunlight. In the summer, this plant will also produce grapes that are so tasty and juicy, your mouth will thank you for it.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the bougainvillea. Once established, the bougainvillea can thrive even under conditions without water or fertilizer. Just be careful when planting a bougainvillea -- you certainly don't want to break its root ball.

Lady Bank's rose vines will bloom yellow and white flowers in the spring and is one of the most colorful vines around. This type of rose has a long history of thriving in our deserts. It's easy to care for, but needs a little support to allow its long canes to drape. This vine's lack of thorns makes it an especially nice plant to grow near your patio.

If you want a vine that will attract birds, nothing beats a pyranchantha. Birds love the plant's berries! But be careful, this plant needs support and is prone to fire blight.

In areas that receive a lot of sun, don't forget to try planting cat's claw. But be careful, this plant is so invasive that I have even seen it grow inside homes! For obvious reasons, it's best to keep this vine in the far reaches of the landscape where it will not take over anything that it shouldn't.

For areas that receive little sun, try planting star jasmine, creeping fig, Carolina jessamine, wisteria or passion flower.

With the exception of bougainvillea and cat's claw, most vines require regular fertilization and a proper watering schedule. And remember, if you're going to plant these vines, keep them moist to wet until established. Happy vining!