

Texas Wisteria - *Wisteria macorstachya* (*frutescens*)

This wisteria vine is native from East Texas down to the coast. It also does well in Hill Country gardens and very similar to the American Wisteria (*Wisteria frutescens*). The Texas wisteria is much more delicate than the Chinese wisteria. The eight to twelve inch purple-lilac flowers with yellow markings bloom in April and May after the leaves appear, instead of on bare wood as with the Asian wisterias. It may bloom again in the summer if conditions are favorable.

Like the Asian wisterias, ours has a pleasing aroma, but in every other way our native is better. The compound leaves are dark green, shiny, and much more attractive. Texas wisteria is far less aggressive than the Asian wisteria, which is sometimes desirable. It climbs by twining, so it does need upward support. You can use it on arbors or train it on a wall—in other words just about anywhere you'd use those other wisterias.

Native Texas wisteria grows well in moist woods and along the edges of swamps in East and Southeast Texas, in part shade to full sun. However it is adaptable to soil Ph. It may require foliar iron in very alkaline soil. Good drainage is a must, and an application of acid mulch can be very beneficial.

With a little attention, our native wisteria is superior to the commonly used Asian species. What this means is that care should be taken in selecting the cuttings for propagation (wisteria grown from seed might not bloom for ten to fifteen years). Be sure you see the blooms before taking your cuttings, so you'll get a good, rich color and fragrance in the flowers.

The lilac-pink flowering variety *albolilacina* is also frequently cultivated.

