



Top: *Holmskioldia 'Lilac'*
Bottom: *Pandorea 'Raspberry Eye'*

TerraVida Tropical Vines

THIS NEW COLLECTION OFFERS 18 UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL VARIETIES THAT WILL PROVIDE A DISTINCTIVE FOCAL POINT FOR ANY GARDEN.

By **Paul Gaydos**

“Life branching out from the earth” is the simple philosophy of TerraVida. This new collection of tropical vine plants offers 18 unique and beautiful varieties that will provide a distinctive and colorful focal point for any garden, patio, doorway, fence or wall. They can provide privacy and attract animals and birds. Many are fragrant and all are suited for containers or the landscape.

Despite all of their different uses and characteristics, vines are not utilized very often in the landscape. This may be because they are all tropical perennials (Zones 9 to 11) and not true northern perennials. But once planted in the northern landscape or used as a patio plant during the long days of summer, these vines will take off and perform well for the home gardener and continue to flower into the early fall months. Some will also do well inside, with lights, all winter and spring. Clerodendrum for example, require very little care. They can help turn a northern sunroom or window-sill into a blooming jungle. Use high-power sodium lights and limit water, and these plants can be enjoyed all winter long.

Vine Types

Most vines, not all, do need support to grow upright: a wall, a fence or an arbor. There are three basic types of vines: clinging, twining and sprawling.

Sprawling-type vines are just shrubs with long runners that must be tied or wound to a

support and will become self-supporting over time. *Holmskioldia*, *thumbergia 'Samantha'* and *allamanda 'Brazilian Red Wine'* are all examples of sprawl-type vines.

Twining-type vines grow upright in a spiral, usually in one direction that you cannot alter or you risk damage to the vine. They must be on a trellis. *Pandorea 'Raspberry Eye'*, *senecio 'Athena Yellow'* and *mandevilla 'Alice Dupont'* are all examples of twining-type vines.

Clinging-type vines use roots or tendrils to be self supporting on to walls, fences or a trellis. *Antigonon 'Antique Pink'*, *mansoa 'Purple Star'* and *pyrostegia 'Orange Flame'* are all examples of clinging-type vines.

Culture

In general, most vines will take between seven and nine weeks to root into a 72-cell tray. However, *Athena* will ship only callus cuttings to save the grower a few weeks in propagation.

Use bottom heat when available and keep day and night temperatures above 70° F. Use warm water as mist, if available and always keep foliage moist for the first three to four weeks. If the leaves dry out, they will fall off. All the vines in the TerraVida collection will root in five or six weeks or less.

I recommend planting one or two rooted cuttings into a 1-gallon container or three to five cuttings into a 2- to 3-gallon pot. Use a trellis and a hanging tag to add extra value to this special product. When planting in the finished pot make sure the root ball is cov-

ered and just below the pot soil level. If planting multiple cuttings per pot, try to keep all cuttings in the center of the finished planter. The plants will support each other and make a more sturdy finished plant.

Like all tropical perennials, high light is very important to finish a nice plant in a reasonable amount of time. Light levels should be between 5,500



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Top: Allamanda 'Brazilian Red Wine'

Bottom: Clero dendrum 'Red Lilac'

and 7,000 foot-candles. HID lights can also be use to reach these levels if available. If the recommended levels of light cannot be reached, only grow in areas of high light or during times of the year when they can be reached.

EC should be kept between 1.8 and 2.2 with a soil pH between 5.6 and 6.2. Most vines are moderate feeders and should be given a well-balanced feed at a rate of 200- to 250-ppm nitrogen. The use of ammonium feeds will increase the rate of growth but the plants will be very soft, especially under lower light levels.

Growth regulators are generally not needed however a single pinch just after planting is recommended.

With a little time and care all these vines can be grown anywhere, sold everywhere and enjoyed by all. ☺

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