

PLANT TNT



Bang for your buck

'Moonlight' Japanese Climbing Hydrangea
(*Schizophragma hydrangeoides* 'Moonlight')

- Multiseason interest
- Manageable growth
- Few pests or diseases
- Part to full shade
- Zones 5 to 9

A close relative of true climbing hydrangea (*Hydrangea anomala* subsp. *petiolaris*), 'Moonlight' Japanese climbing hydrangea is a self-clinging, deciduous vine. Using adhesive rootlets borne along its stems, it can climb a masonry wall or a tree without harming or overwhelming its support. In fall, the leaves turn from lime green to yellow before dropping to reveal a scaffold of reddish brown woody stems. The young foliage, however, is like a full moon on a clear night; the heart-shaped leaves, 3 to 5 inches across, have a silvery sheen accented with dark green veins, and creamy, scented, lacecap blooms appear in summer for 6 to 8 weeks. 'Moonlight' prefers well-drained soil with average moisture in dappled sun to full shade. Although slow to start, it will eventually reach 20 or 30 feet.



Save your cents

Japanese wisteria (*Wisteria floribunda*)

- Difficult to contain
- Self-sows freely
- Escaped from cultivation
- Full sun
- Zones 5 to 9

Here is yet another vegetative case of too much of a good thing turning out to be very, very bad. Japanese wisteria is prized for its spring display of dramatic racemes of fragrant purple or white blossoms and luxuriant foliage. But don't be fooled by its beauty; unless religiously pruned, its rampant growth—to as much as 65 feet—reveals it as a thug. Freely self-sown seedlings have invaded natural areas, where the strong vining stems rapidly shade out, smother, and strangle other plants. All but the sturdiest garden structures eventually collapse under the weight of a mature Japanese wisteria. Finicky about blooming, and plagued by numerous pests and diseases (which disfigure the leaves, but don't slow its growth one iota), this exotic, however beautiful its brief burst of flowering may be, can prove too much for gardens (or gardeners) to accommodate. —Lorene Edwards Forkner