ORNAMENTAL ASIAN CLIMBING VINES FOR THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

BRUCE MACDONALD[1]

The Botanical Garden
University of British Columbia
6804 SW Marine Drive
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4 Canada

One of the major components of the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden is the David C. Lam Asian Garden which is set in native coastal forest. This fortunate setting has enabled us to grow a number of choice and unusual climbing plants into and up many of the native trees, which include *Abies grandis*, *Tsuga heterophylla*, and *Thuja plicata*. The natural effect of growing vines in this way has stimulated others to use them in a similar fashion in the Vancouver landscape. This paper briefly describes a number of these choice vines, their culture and propagation.

An outstanding member of the Hydrangeaceae family is *Schizophragma hydrangeoides*. It climbs to 12 m (40 ft) on the bark of trees and bears a mass of creamy-white flowers in July. The reddish new shoots are particularly attractive. Provenances from Japan have shown some interesting variations in foliage color, particularly in the more glaucous-blue colorations. It is effectively propagated from seed following a 10 to 12 week cold stratification period at 1 to 3 ° C (34 to 38 ° F). Alternatively, it can be propagated in June using nodal tip cuttings or single nodal cuttings with two opposite buds. An effective hormone treatment is 0.5% IBA in talc. The most easily rooted cuttings are those obtained from non-flowering shoots near the base of the plant. These shoots often have pre-formed root initials. A particularly desirable form of *S. hydrangeoides* is 'Roseum' which has bracts that are flushed pink.

Another self-clinging species of the Hydrangeaceae family is *Pileostegia viburnoides*, one of the few evergreen climbers in our collection. It is significantly slower growing than *Schizophragma*, and produces panicles of creamy-yellow flowers during the late summer. Minimal seed propagation has been tried at the Botanical Garden, but it does root effectively during July-September using 0.5 to 0.8% IBA in talc.

A rare *Actinidia* species that we have obtained recently is *A. hemsleyana*. This vigorous, narrow-leaved species grows to over 10 m (35 ft) and is unique because of the bright red soft bristles on the new growth. It may be propagated from single nodal cuttings during June-July using 0.8% IBA in talc.

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An under-rated, vigorous, evergreen climber in the Lardizabalaceae family is *Stauntonia hexaphylla*. Our experience has shown that this species is considerably more hardy than originally thought. The monoecious flowers are white tinged with mauve and appear in April. Successful fertilization will produce fleshy purple fruits in the fall. The species is easily propagated in 4 to 6 weeks using single nodal cuttings in July-September and 0.5% IBA in talc.

An outstanding honeysuckle from China is *Lonicera tragophylla*, which has particularly attractive new growth followed by large golden-yellow flowers in June-July and red berries in the fall. It is equally effective in the landscape on pillars and arbors or grown naturally in evergreen and deciduous trees. This species is best propagated from nodal tip or single nodal cuttings in May-July, using 0.3% IBA in talc. Alternatively, it may be propagated under glass as winter hardwood cuttings in January, using 0.8% IBA in talc. It can be slower rooting than other *Lonicera* species.

A rare species of *Aristolochia* that deserves to be more widely cultivated in gardens is *A. heterophylla*. This Chinese species has interesting small, purplish-brown and yellow flowers in the form of a miniature "Dutchman's pipe". It can be propagated by softwood single nodal cuttings during May-June, using 0.5% IBA in talc.

Sinofranchetia chinensis is a little used, hardy, deciduous climber belonging to the Lardizabalaceae family. The young shoot growth is covered with a purplish bloom, and rather insignificant white flowers are produced in May. Clusters of lavender-purple fruits should arise in the fall providing that male and female plants have been grown together. Propagation is by single nodal cuttings in June-early July, using 0.3% IBA in talc.

A vine that excels in the Pacific Northwest is *Vitis coignetiae*. This vigorous species has large heart-shaped leaves that turn orange-scarlet in the fall, and is excellent for training up large coniferous trees. I have not yet seen this species listed in any catalogue in this region, but we are currently in the final process of having it virus-tested with the cooperation of the Plant Quarantine division of Agriculture Canada, Sidney, BC. Propagation is best carried out using single nodal cuttings in May-July, with 0.5% IBA in talc. Winter propagation is effective in January-February, using vine eyes or nodal cuttings 20 cm (8 in.) long.

A climber in the Asteraceae (Compositae) family that is not widely known is *Senecio scandens* from eastern Asia. The yellow daisy-like flowers appear in July and continue to bloom into October. The species grows up to 5 m (16 ft) tall, and is particularly useful for sheltered walls or scrambling over tree stumps or shrubs. It is not

hardy but can be treated as a herbaceous perennial in colder climates. The species is best propagated from seed following a 6 to 8 week cold stratification period at 1 to 3° C (34 to 38° F).

Finally, mention should be made of a little-known herbaceous climber that belongs to the Campanulaceae family and is native to western China and the Himalayas. *Codonopsis* species are normally tuberous although some do produce multiple stems. We have had considerable success with *C. convolvulacea* by allowing it to grow through rhododendrons. The lavender-blue, star-shaped flowers are particularly effective in mid-summer against the dark green foliage of the rhododendrons. *Codonopsis* species are best propagated from seed.

Only a few of the many climbing plants growing in the David C. Lam Asian Garden have been described in this paper. Most genera and species are readily propagated, but considerable care and time is needed in their production and marketing. However, it is in the landscape that climbers are really under-utilized, and we still have many imaginative ways in which they can be used.

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