FPS545



Senecio confusus Mexican Flame Vine¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

This twining, evergreen sprawling vine has four-inch-long, coarsely toothed, dark green leaves and terminal clusters of orange-red, one-inch, daisy-like flowers with golden centers (Fig. 1). Although it appears throughout the year, peak periods of bloom are spring and summer. The quick growth of Mexican flame vine is ideal to add interest to palm trunks, to soften fences, or to veil a trellis. Occasional heading helps some foliage and flowers at the bottom of a fence or other structure supporting Mexican flame vine. Left unpruned, foliage and flowers accumulate at the top.

General Information

Scientific name: Senecio confusus

Pronunciation: sen-NEESH-shee-oh kun-FEW-sus

Common name(s): Mexican flame vine

Family: Compsitae

Plant type: ground cover

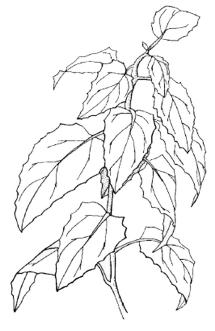


Figure 1. Mexican flame vine

USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to North America

Uses: ground cover; cascading down a wall

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^{1.} This document is FPS545, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date October, 1999. Reviewed September, 2007. Visit the EDIS Web Site at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu.

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out

of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: dentate

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: orange-red

Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part

sun

Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; slightly alkaline;

clay; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected

by pests

Use and Management

Easily grown in full sun or partial shade, Mexican flame vine thrives in any soil with little care. Although knocked down by frost, it will quickly recover in USDA hardiness zones 8b and 9. Growth rate is so rapid, it can be used as an annual vine, planting yearly in areas subjected to freezing winter temperatures.

The cultivar 'Sao Paulo' has deeper orange, almost brick red flowers.

Propagation is by seed or stem cuttings. The green, fleshy stems will root at the nodes when in contact with soil.

Nematodes, mites, scales, and caterpillars all bother Mexican flame vine.



Figure 3. Flower of Mexican flame vine

Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.