

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Social Climbers



This crabapple tree boasts grapevines and bower vines climbing its branches.

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The non-invasive honeysuckle, from the genus *Diervilla*, is native to North America and an essential part of our ecosystem, providing food for native insects. If you want honeysuckle, plant *Diervilla*. As a self-adherent aerial plant, ivy is an aggressive climber that can wreak havoc on structures, buildings, walls, and trees. Highly flammable, ivy harbors rodents and is extremely difficult to eradicate. These three specimens are what I call the “anti-social climbers”. Delete them from your most-wanted list.

Why do you want to include climbing plants in your garden design? The reasons are numerous and desirable.

Vertical Interest: Climbing plants allow for more dynamic and layered landscapes as we look up.

Climbers can cover arbors, trellises, fences, pergolas, and walls, adding depth and texture.

Space Optimization: Climbing plants are space-savers, especially for small gardens or urban settings where space is limited. Because they grow vertically, they make efficient use of space while making a big impact.



The Moraga Garden Club planted a small yet pretty garden at the Moraga Library.

Privacy and Screening: This may be one of the best reasons for growing climbers. By growing up, they provide a natural privacy barrier, offering seclusion with the added benefit of beauty and, most often, fragrance.

Aesthetic Appeal: With their beautiful cascading flowers, foliage, or fruit, climbers create a lush and romantic atmosphere.

Wildlife Habitat: Biodiversity is established in the garden as most climbers attract birds, butterflies, bees, hummingbirds, and other pollinators. They offer food, shelter, and nesting sites for various creatures which contribute to a healthy ecosystem.

Versatility: Vines, creepers, scramblers, and climbers can be trained to grow in diverse directions and on several structures to customize landscapes.

Other than nasturtiums, all the climbers require heavy-duty, solid support structures to grow and flourish successfully. If you want to keep the climbers “social”, it is necessary to prune, maintain, and be watchful, or else they will land in the “anti-social” profile. With careful management and thought, climbers will add beauty, functionality, privacy, and ecological benefits to your garden. Enhance your outdoor space with spectacular social climbers reaching great heights with the right support.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing!