Petrea volubilis

Common Names: Queen’s Wreath, Petrea, Purple Wreath, Sandpaper Vine

Synonyms (Discarded Names): Petrea arborea; P. aspera; P. racemosa

Origin: Southern Mexico, Central America, South America, Caribbean

U.S.D.A. Zone: 10a-12 (Minimum 32°F)

Plant Type: Semi-evergreen vine or subshrub

Growth Rate: Medium

Leaf Type: Simple, opposite

Flowering Months: February to June

Flower Color: Purple, white

Fruit Color: Not applicable

Light Requirements: High, medium

Salt Tolerance: Medium

Drought Tolerance: High

Wind Tolerance: High

Soil Tolerance: Wide

Nutritional Requirements: Medium

Major Potential Pests: None

Typical Dimensions: Not applicable

Propagation: Layering, cuttings

Human Hazards: None

Uses: Flowering vine, container, patio, gated entrance, streetscape, on trees, along fences

Geographic Distribution

Queen’s Wreath native range extends from southern Mexico south to northern and western South America and into Paraguay. It is also native to the Caribbean including Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico and Hispaniola. The plant is grown in the tropics and subtropics around the world.

Growth Habit

Reminiscent of northern wisteria when viewed from a distance, queen’s wreath is a strong high climbing, twining vine or subshrub. It produces relatively few branches usually from several woody trunks. The bark is relatively smooth and light colored.
Queen’s Wreath is capable of growing up to 40 feet tall over a considerable area if let unpruned. It has spectacular drooping inflorescence of lavender flowers. The plant is variably deciduous.
Almost leafless, trellis supported, intense flowering vine, Fort Myers, Florida, Early April.  [YouTube on this vine]

Fully leafed small tree, Costa Rica, Early October
Leaves
The decussate-opposite leaves are thick and stiff. Both sides of the leaf are harshly-textured being sand papery-like. Leaf blades are obtuse, oblong to elliptic shaped, typically 4 to 6 inches long and 2.25 to 4 inches wide with an entire or wavy edge. Petioles are short, 0.25 to 0.5 inches long, and the leaf apex is acute or shortly acuminate and the base cuneate. The blade is deep green above and lighter green below and is densely or sparsely pubescent beneath. New leaves are light green and also stiff. Depending on location, leaves become light green and necrotic in the winter and fall from the vine to varying degrees.

Flowers and Fruits
Queen’s Wreath begin flowering while still quite young, requiring two to three years to bloom effectively. In South Florida, flowering is most intense from February to June. It blooms intermittently during those months and throughout the year. The plant might be almost leafless with the first intense bloom of the season or having varying degree of foliage. The small salverform flowers have slender long pedicels, 0.5 to 0.75 inches long, and are clustered in racemes of 6 to 14 inches long. The flowers begin to open at the base of the raceme and proceed upward. The flowers are showy and distinctive and the bloom profuse. The 5-lobed corolla is dark blue or violet subtended by a larger, widely-spaced and lighter blue, purplish or white calyx about 1.75 inches wide. The calyx persists after the corolla falls. Gradually the calyx turns grayish as it dries and ages and finally becomes brown before falling off several weeks after the corolla had fallen. If the flowers have been pollinated earlier, a fruit capsule develops in the center of the calyx. The calyx takes on the role of flight wings and assist in seed dispersal by spinning on the wind like little helicopters.

Queen’s wreath blooms at the same time as flame vine (Pyrostegia acerifolium), Confederate jasmine (Trachelospermum jasminoides), Mexican flame vine (Pseudogynoxys chenopodioideis) and garlic vine (Bignonia aequinoctilis).
The raceme can be used as cut flowers but only if removed from its stems. Inflorescences attached to their stems quickly fade.

A white-flowered variant is recognized as cultivar ‘Albiflora.’
Planting and Maintenance Guidelines
Full sun or broken shade and a deep soil are the preferred situations for growing queen’s wreath. It may be grown on an arbor, gazebo, fence, or tree, where it will climb into the crown, then cascade out into the sunlight. Use it as a rambling or controlled vine or maintain it as a shrub or small tree with one or more strong trunks. As a vine, it requires a sturdy support. It can grow up to 40 feet high with an equal spread, but can be kept much smaller with occasional pruning. Water it frequently to get it established. Once established, it needs little care and infrequent irrigation. Fertilize as needed. Keep lawn grass back from the root zone and protect the small plant when frost is forecast. Propagation is from cutting or air layers, since seed is rarely produced.

Sri Lanka weevil can be a damaging pest. Less so are lobate lac scales.

References


Top Tropical Nursery, *Petrea volubilis*, Queen’s Wreath.

Useful Links


All pictures were taken by Stephen H. Brown
Glossary

**Acute.** Tapering to a pointed apex with more or less straight line.

**Apex** (pl. apices). The tip; the point farthest from the point of attachment.

**Calyx** (pl. calyces). The collective term for all of the sepals of a flower.

**Corolla.** The collective term for all of the petals of a flower.

**Cuneate.** Wedge-shaped, triangular and tapering to a point at the base.

**Decussate.** Arranged along the stem in pairs, with each pair at right angles to the pair above or below.

**Inflorescence.** The flowering part of a plant; a flower cluster; the arrangement of the flowers on the flowering axis.

**Pedicel.** The stalk of a single flower in an inflorescence, or of a grass spikelet.

**Petiole.** A leaf stalk

**Pubescent.** Covered with short soft hairs.

**Raceme.** An unbranched, elongated inflorescence with pedicellate flowers maturing from the bottom upwards.

**Samara.** A dry, indehiscent, winged fruit.

**Samaroid.** Samara-like

**Salverform.** A flower with a slender corolla tube abruptly flattened and spreading at the mouth.