

Trumpet creeper

(*Campsis radicans*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms.

Trumpet creeper is a high-climbing woody vine so named because its showy flowers are trumpet-shaped. It is found in moist woodlands and thickets throughout Central and northern Florida. Flowers bloom year-round, peaking in spring and summer. They are very attractive to hummingbirds.

Trumpet creeper's flowers are long, tubular and reddish-orange with a yellowish throat. They are born in terminal cymes. Leaves are dark green, pinnately compound and fern-like. Leaflets, which number at least 7 per leaf, are ovate to lanceolate with serrated margins and pointed tips. Leaves and leaflets are oppositely arranged. The plant climbs via aerial rootlets. Tendrils are lacking. Stem is woody and robust. Fruit is a long (3–5 inches) bean-like capsule bearing many winged seeds. Flowers are very similar in appearance to the flowers of its cousin, Crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*). The latter has visible tendrils and its compound leaves have only two leaflets.

The species epithet *radicans* comes from the Latin *radix*, or “root,” and refers to the plant's motility via its aerial roots. There are only two species in the *Campsis* genus – the other is Chinese trumpet vine (*C. grandiflora*), a native of East Asia.

Family: Bignoniaceae (Bignonia family)

Native range: Central and north Florida

To see where natural populations of Trumpet creeper have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 8A–9B

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Moist sandy, loamy or clay soils

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: 30'+ long

Propagation: Cuttings, seed

Garden tips: Because of its fast growth rate and potential size, Trumpet creeper may be difficult to control in a small setting. It is best used in a naturalistic landscape or, with persistent pruning, trained on a fence or large trellis. Do not let this plant grow on a house or other structure as its aerial roots can damage wood, brick, stone and stucco. Trumpet creeper grows well in shade, but flowers more profusely in sun. In the north, it is deciduous, while in the south, it is generally evergreen.

Trumpet creeper plants are available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit www.PlantRealFlorida.org to find a nursery in your area.



Photo by Keith Bradley