

PASSIFLORA CAERULEA



Classification:

Order: [Malpighiales](#)

Family: [Passifloraceae](#)

Genus: [Passiflora](#)

Species: *P. caerulea*

Commonly known as the 'Blue passion Flower', *Passiflora caerulea* is one of the hardiest and most commonly cultivated of all passion flower species. It is a vigorous, self-clinging climbing plant, although possibly considered rampant under favorable conditions. It will often form a dense blanket of tangled stems supported by flagellate-twining tendrils between 5 and 10 cm long. Though evergreen in its native regions of Argentina and southern Brazil, it will drop its leaves in all but the mildest of northern European climates.

The leaves are palmate and variably lobed, displaying between 5-7 lobes on each leaf. A supporting tendril is located at the base of each leaf.



The mildly fragrant blooms appear continuously throughout the summer and autumn but will usually come to an end by the time the first frosts arrive.

The flowers are complex in design and can be between 7 and 10 cm across. There are five sepals and petals which are similar in appearance. They are generally of a white coloration although they can be tinged with pink.

The conspicuous corona has a crown of outer filaments which are painted blue at the tips, white in the middle and purple at the base.

In addition there are five greenish-yellow stamens and three purple stigmas. In tropical and subtropical climates “*Passiflora Caerulea*” will flower and fruit all year round.



Both the common and genus name are in honor of the blooms which were believed by the early Spanish priests who arrived in South America to be a representation of Christ's passion.

The three stigmas embody the three nails, while the five anthers reflect the five wounds.

The central corona represents the crown of thorns and the ten sepals and tepals represent the apostles - minus Peter and Judas. Finally, the lobed leaves and whip-like tendrils are said to be the hands and scourges of Jesus's persecutors.



The flowers are easily pollinated and give way to orange-red, ovoid fruits. Each fruit is approximately 6 cm long, 4 cm in diameter and containing numerous 'jelly-covered' seeds. While the fruits are indeed edible they tend to be a little bland in flavor.

Plant out *Passiflora caerulea* in May on a south or west facing wall. It will be fine in any well-drained, ordinary garden soil, in a sheltered site that receives full sun or partial shade. Of course *Passiflora caerulea* will flower and fruit more profusely in full sun. For the first couple of year you should consider providing dry mulch at the base of the plant and additional winter protection over the main structure. If needed, trellis or horizontal wires will provide suitable support. It is advisable to tie in the young branches until the tendrils have taken hold.