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 UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO  
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# Vines for LANDSCAPING

Vines are valuable and versatile plants for landscape use. They will climb, trail, creep or remain erect with some support in addition to their stems. They will be attractive in a small space no other plant can use.

Nearly every landscape plan should make use of vines. They are good to cover arbors, pergolas and patios for shade and privacy. They do well in areas too narrow for a shrub next to the foundation. Some can be used as ground cover on slopes or shaded areas.

Vines may be used to cover a wall or screen or to hide an old stump, cellar door or piled rock.

Some vines are grown for their profuse or fragrant bloom. Others are grown for colorful foliage or fruits. Some such as English ivy are grown because of their persistent foliage. Grapes are grown for ornament and fruit.

Brick or stone walls will look cooler when they are partially covered with vines. They should not be completely covered, however. Let some of the bricks or stones show. There is disagreement over whether to cover fireplaces with vines. We think a fireplace partially covered looks good, but the vines should not extend over the opening of the chimney for safety reasons.

Some vines require a trellis and others have holdfasts that fasten them to the wall. Some twist clockwise; others, counterclockwise. Bittersweet twines from left to right and honeysuckle twines from right to left. Some prefer the sunny side; others, the shade. Vines such as Boston ivy and English ivy suffer from sun scorch during hot summer days if on the south or southwest side of a building.

Annual vines such as morning glory and scarlet runner beans may be grown where profuse and rapid growth are desired. Perennial vines can provide long-lasting beauty. There are many perennial vines that can be grown in Idaho.



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### Perennial vines for Idaho

**Virginia creeper** is the 5-leaved ivy often called Wood-bine. It is one of the first plants to show fall color. The leaves turn scarlet. If the vine is planted in the sun, the leaves are soon ruined by leaf hoppers. It should only be used where Boston ivy is not hardy. It is too loose and open to be rated high. It is very hardy.

**Boston ivy** is a clinging vine prized for clinging to brick and stone walls. It has small root-like holdfasts that stick to stonework. I have seen it grow to the top of a 7-story brick building. The leaves turn a scarlet in the fall. It is generally planted on the south and southwest sides of buildings in southern Idaho. Some years it suffers from sun



scorch in July and August, but this is just one of the hazards many good plants face. It does well at Gooding, Moscow, Twin Falls, Boise and places with similar climates.

**English ivy** is the ivy we see clinging to tree trunks and walls. It is recommended for the north and east sides of the building in southwestern Idaho. It keeps its leaves all winter. It is easily reproduced by cuttings. It does well in the Boise valley and similar areas. There are many varieties.

**Dutchman's-pipe** is my favorite twining vine. I like it because of its large leaves and the flowers that are shaped like small Meerschaum pipes. It is a vigorous grower, good for covering arbors and trellises. It should only be planted in the Boise valley and warmer climates.

**Trumpet vine** is a shrubby vine that clings to stone with small, root-like holdfasts. When it gets large and heavy, it needs additional support. The orange to scarlet, trumpet-shaped flowers that bloom in the latter part of July are its main attraction. It makes a nice screen on a fence. It is spectacular when trained to climb a pole. Humming birds love to feed on the flowers. It is hardy in the Boise valley and similar climates.

**American bittersweet** is a vine especially valuable for the yellow and red berries produced in the fall. These are highly decorative. The leaves also turn yellow in fall. You need both staminate and pistillate plants to have fruit because the sexes are on different plants. It is reliable only in climates similar or warmer than the Boise valley.



**Clematis** is a vine that requires a trellis. There are many species. Probably the one most generally grown in Idaho is *Clematis jackmani*. It becomes a mass of purple flowers in June or later, depending on climate. It should be planted on the east and north sides of buildings in warmer areas. If planted on the south side of the house, shade the base of the plant. The exposure makes little difference at higher altitudes. Nice specimen are found in Soda Springs. Quite often they kill back to the snow line, but the bloom is on the new growth so there is no worry.

Other varieties and species of clematis can be grown, but all are not as hardy as the Jackmani.

**Trumpet honeysuckle** is a beautiful twining vine with orange to scarlet trumpet-shaped flowers. It is very hardy so it is a desirable vine for the higher altitudes. Its red berries are attractive in the fall.

**Matrimony vine** is not a vine but a vine-like shrub. It is very hardy and has escaped cultivation to become a weed. It will grow in poor soil. The flowers are small and purple and the fruit red or orange-red berries. It is listed as poisonous to livestock.

**Silver Fleece vine** or Silver Lace vine is a beautiful vigorous twining vine that is good for covering arbors and porches. Its mass of small greenish white flower clusters in the late summer makes it very attractive. It is adapted to Gooding, Twin Falls and warmer climates.

**Climbing roses** may also be used in the warmer parts of Idaho. These will need trellises.

**Grapes** can be used to cover arbors and porches. In the fall, the fruit will drop. This will make the ground messy

and attract bees as well. The grape makes a nice dual purpose vine, since the fruit can be eaten or processed.

Nearly any variety of American grape or French hybrid can be used in the Boise valley and similar climates. At the higher altitudes, Beta is the most reliable variety.

**Wisterias** do well in warmer areas. The long racemes of flowers are very striking in May. Varieties of this twining vine may be planted to cover pergolas, arbors and porches. It is an old-fashioned vine that everyone likes. Sometimes a vine just won't bloom and in such cases it is sometimes effective to root prune in early spring by inserting a spade in the circle around the vine, 1 ½ feet deep about 2 feet from the trunk. Sometimes the flower buds are killed by low winter temperatures.





# Serving the State

## Teaching .... Research .... Service

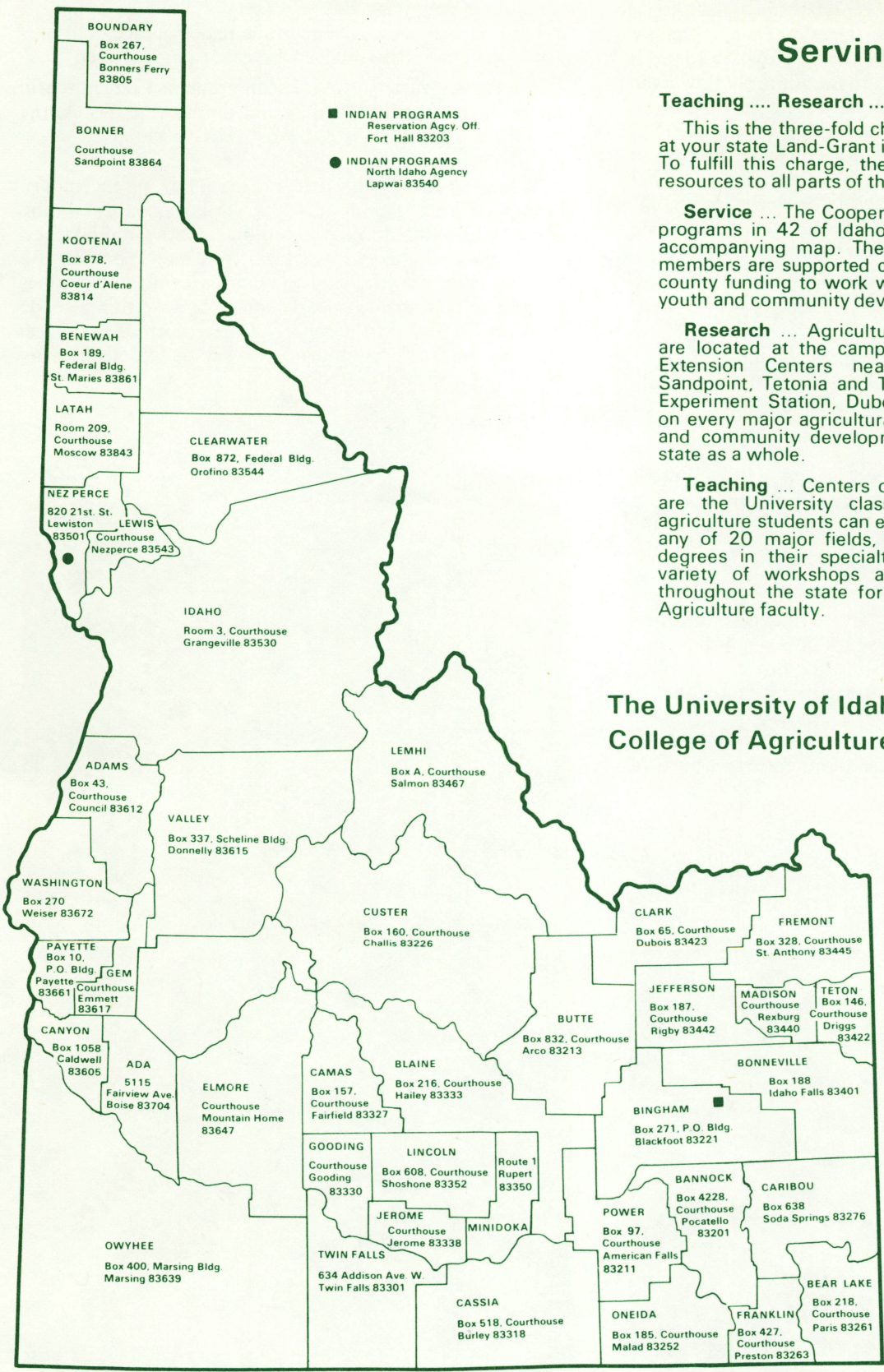
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**Service** ... The Cooperative Extension Service has active programs in 42 of Idaho's 44 counties as shown on the accompanying map. These College of Agriculture faculty members are supported cooperatively by federal, state and county funding to work with agriculture, home economics, youth and community development.

**Research** ... Agricultural Experiment Station scientists are located at the campus in Moscow, at Research and Extension Centers near Aberdeen, Caldwell, Parma, Sandpoint, Teton and Twin Falls and at the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station, Dubois. Their work includes research on every major agricultural crop in Idaho and on economic and community development activities that apply to the state as a whole.

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