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# How to Grow Moonflowers: The Complete Guide



Photo Credit: Gerry Bishop

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Botanical Name: | <i>Ipomoea alba</i> and <i>Ipomoea a noctiflora</i> |
| Plant Type:     | Vine  |
| Season:         | Full Sun ,  |

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# Planting, Growing, and Caring for Moonflower Vines

By [Andy Wilcox](#)

Last Updated: August 11, 2024




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Gorgeous, graceful, and fragrant, moonflowers provide an atmosphere of romance and mystery wherever you grow them. They are a tender perennial vine but often grown annually, depending on the region. Learn how to plant, grow, and care for moonflowers.

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## About Moonflowers

If you search online for moonflowers, one of the first things you'll notice is little agreement on what a moonflower is. Both plants of the *Datura* genus and members of the *Ipomoea* genus go by the common name of moonflower, as well as tropical white morning glory and moon vine.

In this guide, we are talking about *Ipomoea alba*, also known as *Ipomoea noctiflora*. The Plants of the World Online database maintained by the Royal Botanical Gardens recognizes the two species as synonyms. With that cleared up, we'll just call them moonflowers. They're a tender perennial vine hardy only in USDA zones 10 to 12, but they can be grown as annuals in other regions.

Moonflowers are prized for their habit of opening only in the evening—hence the name—and for their intoxicating fragrance. The flowers will close again in the morning, spending the day wrapped up like the more familiar morning glories. Their almost luminescent, giant blooms

bit of romance in the garden. [See How to Create a Moon Garden.](#)

#### ADVERTISEMENT

If you give moonflowers something to climb, you'll be in for a treat. Their vigorous vines twine around and grow up to 15 feet. Once they start blooming in summer, they'll continue until autumn frost. The five-inch-wide flowers are bell-shaped and white and appear to glow in the evening. During the day, moonflowers look like a stately dark green vine as the flowers close.

Moonflowers smell sweet to us and polli-

other bees and insects. Their trumpet-bell-shaped flowers are sometimes visited by hummingbirds as well. [See more flowers that attract hummingbirds.](#)



*Moonflower (Ipomoea alba) blooming on a vine. Credit: ChViroj*

#### Read Next

- [How to Grow Bellflowers: The Complete Guide to Campanula](#)
- [How to Grow Heliotropes: The Complete Guide](#)
- [How to Grow Star Jasmine: The Complete Plant Guide](#)

## PLANTING

Moonflowers enjoy full sun and won't mind the more intense afternoon rays. Fertile, loamy soil is best, but they will tolerate most soils if drainage is adequate.

These vines can grow to large, trellis-covering proportions, which requires energy. To give them plenty to work with, provide some finished compost and aged manure in their bed.

Moonflowers can also be grown in large containers and allowed to vine and twine around pergola posts, deck railings, and lattice. Use a pot with good drainage and some mass to anchor it well. For city dwellers, moonflowers make a fantastic scented privacy screen when crawling up a lattice or trellis support on your deck or patio.

## When to Plant Moonflowers

You may start moonflower seeds indoors 4 to 6 weeks before your last frosts. Or, in warmer areas, sow them directly in the ground.

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They can be transplanted out or directly seeded after all danger of frost has passed and the soil has warmed. Remember, these are tropical plants, and they won't grow much in cooler weather.

## How to Plant Moonflowers

- Moonflower seeds have a hard coating, so nick them with a nail file or soak them for 24 hours to aid germination.
- The seeds won't germinate in cold soil (this is a tropical plant), so if sowing outdoors, wait until soil temps are about 70 to 80 F. Many gardeners have better luck starting them indoors first.
- Plant about ¼ inch deep in individual cells or small pots. Keep moist.



- Before transplanting or direct seeding, prepare the bed by working in a layer of compost.
- Harden off seedlings for 7 to 10 days before transplanting.
- If direct seeding, sow seed 1/2 inch deep. Space seeds about four inches apart.
- Install the trellis or arbor (if not planting near something to climb) when you direct sow or transplant to avoid damaging roots later.

## GROWING

Once they germinate and get growing, moonflowers are pretty carefree. They'll seem to grow slowly at first and then take off. Keep them neat and stunning by giving them something to climb, or they may sprawl around and cause a fuss.

- Moonflowers prefer consistently moist soil, but don't overdo it. If in doubt, stick your finger in the soil. If it feels dry past the first knuckle, give them

minimize dry periods.

- Deadheading moonflowers will encourage more blooms, but they'll keep flowering if you miss a few. Remove them before they develop seeds if you live in warmer climates where these vines are perennial, as they can spread.



## GARDENING PRODUCTS



## PESTS/DISEASES

Moonflowers don't seem to suffer much from pests or diseases other than root rot in poorly drained soils.

## WIT AND WISDOM

- If work keeps you away from your garden during the day, plant moonflowers to sit by in the evening when you get home.
- Moonflowers are especially attractive to hummingbird clearwing moths and sphinx moths.
- While beautiful, moonflowers, like other members of the *Ipomoea* genus, are toxic. Don't eat them.

**FLOWERS**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Andy Wilcox is a flower farmer and master gardener with a passion for soil health, small producers, forestry, and horticulture.

[Read More from Andy Wilcox](#)

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## COMMENTS

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**Sherry (not verified)** 2 weeks 3 days ago

I had moon flowers last year but I am not sure if they are growing this year I have some vines growing but they have pricked on them not

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**REPLY**

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**Janna (not verified)** 2 weeks 6 days ago

I've grown Moonflowers and Morning Glories  
but not together would they do good together ?

**REPLY**

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**sandra (not verified)** 2 months 3 weeks ago

I am really in love with moon flowers! i am re-  
ally wanting a moon flower bush not a vine. i  
had a moon flower plant years ago and it did  
not vine but instead  
was a bush. I am not having any luck finding a  
bush, can you help me?

thank you sandra

**REPLY**

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**Alex (not verified)** 9 months ago

I've grown moonflowers and morning glories

yard. So far, they haven't bloomed. Is it too late in the summer to expect them to bloom? They are still growing and spreading out along the fence, but I am beginning to get worried. Could the heat wave earlier this summer have kept them from producing blossoms?

**REPLY**

**The Editors** 9 months ago

Hi Alex,

While the arrival of flowers can be a tad late, especially for some varieties of morning glories, it is not cause for alarm. Both are known to bloom from summer to fall, some of varieties of moonflowers and morning glories won't begin blooming until late summer and last well into the fall. It sounds like the foliage is doing well and the blooms just might be slightly delayed. If you were on top of keeping your plants watered, the heat wave likely didn't affect your plant's ability

One thing to consider is that morning glories do well in poor soil, so if you have fertilized the area they were planted in you might be seeing the results of too many available nutrients, which means more foliage at the expense of flowers.

Hope this helps!

REPLY

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**Scott (not verified)** 11 months 1 week ago

The “Man of the Earth” flower led me here.  
Now I’m very interested in moonflowers since I love spending time out in the moonlight.  
Thanks for educating me

REPLY

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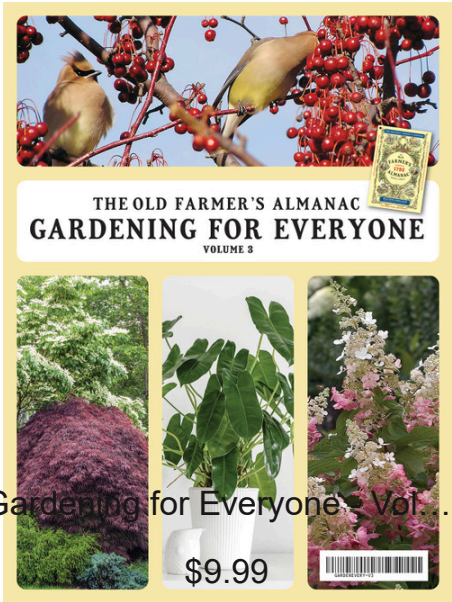




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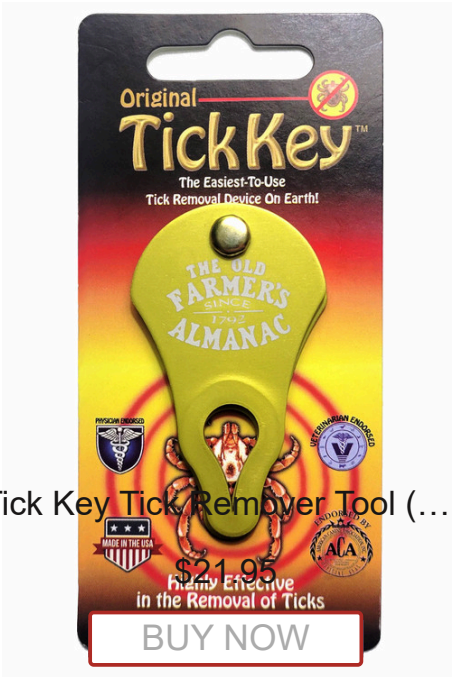
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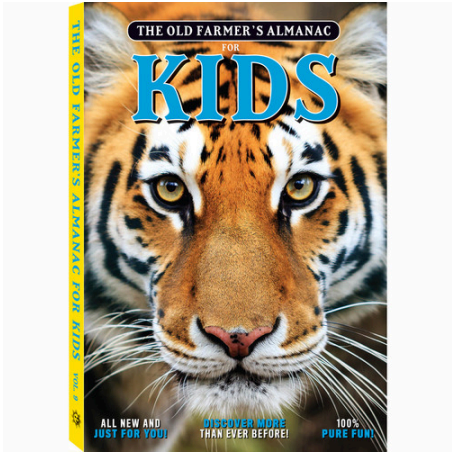
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