Gelsemium sempervirens
Carolina or Yellow Jessamine

The fragrant yellow bells of Carolina Jessamine are a sure sign of spring. A profusion of flowers appear for several months, and the glossy, oval leaves remain attractive all year. This native is at home from Guatemala north to the southeastern United States.* It is South Carolina’s state flower.

**Vine**

- **Height:** 10–20 feet
- **Spread:** 3–6 feet
- **Bloom Color:** Yellow

**Characteristics**

- Climbing, twining, evergreen vine
- Pointed glossy leaves on wiry, reddish stems
- Fragrant, long-lasting, trumpet-shaped yellow flowers in early spring
- Thin, flattened fruit capsules
- Bronzy to purple patina on leaves in winter

**Attributes**

- Tolerates clay soil, some drought, and wind; no serious pests or diseases; deer seldom severely damage
- Bloom can start as early as December, with later brief rebloom in early fall
- All parts are highly toxic if eaten; sap may cause skin irritation in sensitive individuals
- Attracts bees—nectar, if gathered in large quantities, may be toxic to honey bees (University of Florida)—butterflies, and hummers; provides cover for birds

***Growing and Maintenance Tips***

- **Soil Requirements:** Humus-rich, well-drained
- **Light Requirements:** Sun, Partial Shade
- **Water Requirements:** Moist
- **Best flower production in sun; prune after flowering**
- **Use as a climber on arbors, fences, walls, and near entries or patios; use as a rambler in containers or as ground cover for slopes and banks**
- **Hardiness:** USDA Zones 7–10

---

*Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

Images by Mary Free, Glencarlyn Garden

---

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. Eileen J. Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; H. Ray McKinney, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State, Petersburg.