Parthenocissus tricuspidata - Boston Ivy (Vitaceae)

Parthenocissus tricuspidata is a lush and vigorous climbing vine with glossy summer foliage and rich yellow, red, and burgundy autumn foliage.

FEATURES

Form
-large climbing semi-woody vine
-maturing at least to the height and width of the structure upon which it climbs, sometimes over 100' climbing vine growth habit
-rapid growth rate (3-10' per year once established)

Culture
-prefers full sun to partial sun in moist, well-drained soils, but is tolerant of a wide range of urban stresses, including heat, drought, high light reflection, poor soils, thin soils, compacted soils, restricted root zones, soils of variable pH, and heavy pruning
-virtually no disease or pest problems of significance
-moderate availability, usually as a young vine staked or trellised in containers

Foliage
-emerging bronzed, changing to a medium then dark green, with very glossy upper surfaces, to 6" wide
-each leaf has 3 prominent lobes, or sometimes is so deeply sinuate that it forms 3 leaflets at the top of the petiole
-coarsely serrated (almost dentate), having acuminate apices on the lobes, with a 4" long petiole, and with the leaf blades parallel to the structure upon which the vine is climbing
-brilliant glossy yellow, orange, scarlet, crimson, and/or wine autumn color begins in Sept. and abscises in Oct. sometimes with the petioles remaining attached for a week or 2 to the stems after the leaflets have abscised

Flowers
-small
-greenish
-hidden by the foliage
-June-July

Fruits
-clusters of small bluish-black grape fruits
-readily eaten by the birds
-usually hidden by the foliage

Twigs
-heavily lenticeled and bumpy, with holdfasts for stone, brick, wood, or bark attachment

Trunk
-not applicable

USAGE

Function
-structural cover

Texture
-medium texture in foliage and when bare
-thick density

Assets
-rapid growth
-dense foliage
-excellent autumn color

Liabilities
-may cover windows, doors, and wire mesh screens

Habitat
-Zone 3
-Native to Central China

SELECTIONS

Alternates
-large and vigorous vines with a solid anchoring system, and especially utilized for the cover of stone or brick buildings in environmental conditions ranging from full sun to full shade (Hedera helix, Parthenocissus quinquefolia)
-climbing vines with excellent autumn color (Parthenocissus quinquefolia)

Cultivars - Variants - Related species
-several selected based on foliage size, shape, and autumn color

-Parthenocissus quinquefolia - Virginia Creeper (image below) - functionally identical to Boston Ivy, but with duller, lighter green summer foliage that is 5-leaflet in form, with palmate leaflet attachment to the petiole via petiolules