

Q: Can I grow matrimony vine?

A: *Lycium barbarum* - L. Box Thorn

An interesting choice for your edible garden, this deciduous plant is listed both as a vine and as a shrub. Along with the better known tomatoes and eggplants it is a member of the nightshade family. It is easy to grow, tolerating soils with only moderate fertility and a broad pH range, and sun to part shade. It does require regular moisture with good drainage. Matrimony vine is hardy to USDA zone 7, (10 F to 0 F or -18 to 12C), and will tolerate our summer temperatures as well. The branches are thorny, and tend to grow in unwieldy mounds. The plant blooms in summer with lavender tubular flowers with red berries produced in the fall. Many parts of the plant are consumed from the young shoots to the ripe berries, with the best production of young shoots produced in response to heavy pruning. It is occasionally described as invasive, so if you plant it, watch where it spreads. The root system is extensive and has been planted to stabilize soils.



[http://plants.usda.gov/gallery/standard/lyha\\_001\\_svd.jpg](http://plants.usda.gov/gallery/standard/lyha_001_svd.jpg)