

Coral honeysuckle

(*Lonicera sempervirens*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms.

Coral honeysuckle is a robust, woody vine that is mostly evergreen, but can be deciduous in colder climates. Its showy blooms are scarlet red to reddish-orange, tubular and 2"+ long. Fruits are small, bright red berries that appear in the fall. Leaves are oppositely arranged, oval to oblong in shape, and have dark green upper surfaces and silvery-green undersides. Leaves growing directly under or closest to the flower base are usually fully clasping the stem.

Coral honeysuckle typically flowers in spring and summer, but its bloom season has been known to extend into fall. It occurs naturally in sandhills, hardwood hammocks, floodplains and open woodlands. The flowers are attractive to many butterflies and hummingbirds find them irresistible. Birds such as cardinals enjoy the fruits.

Family: Caprifoliaceae (Honeysuckle family)

Native range: Panhandle to north and central peninsula

To see where natural populations of Coral honeysuckle have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 7–11

Soil: Moist but well-drained, acidic to slightly alkaline soils

Exposure: Full sun to moderate shade

Growth habit: 15'+

Propagation: Seed, cuttings, air layering

Garden tips: Coral honeysuckle is best if trained to a structure such as a fence, trellis or arbor. Without a structure, it may develop only into a weak shrub. To harvest seeds, collect fruits when they are bright red, then remove, clean and dry the seeds.

Coral honeysuckle is often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery on your area.



Photo by Terry Zinn



Clasping leaves. Photo by Ray Mathews, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center