



Vine  
Deciduous

Map #92

*Kentucky Wisteria*  
(*Wisteria macrostachya*)  
Family: *Fabaceae*

**Leaves:** odd compound pinnate usually with 9 leaflets; bright green and slightly hairy above when young, then smooth above and slightly hairy beneath.

**Buds:** alternate; The brown woolly buds are long, pointed and covered with 2 scales.

**Stems:** thick, woody, twining vine; the yellow-brown young stems bear a fine white hair lending the plant a velvety feel. As the twining stems age, they become glabrous and turn brownish gray with numerous fine raised lenticels.

**Bark:** gray to reddish-brown with many fine bumps

**Flowers:** large, many-flowered dangling clusters (up to 18"), of lavender, boat-and-keel flowers borne in May.

**Fruits:** tan, smooth, twisted pods are 3—5" long and remain throughout the winter.

**Habit:** 15—25' twining vine which should be grown on an open structure to facilitate the twining stems and allows flower clusters to dangle from overhead.

**Culture:** This very adaptable species prefers well-drained, moist soils but it tolerates from wet to average dry sites with a slightly acid to slightly alkaline pH, and full sun to shade, although flowering will be improved with more light. It is fast-growing but considered difficult to transplant. Provide ample support for thick woody vines when mature. Best grown on an overhead structure where the flowers can dangle through the openings. Important to obtain from a northern source that is reliably hardy in zone 5.

**Cultivars:** 'Abbeyville Blue' - blue flowered; 'Bayou Two o'clock' - blue flowers in long, pointed clusters; 'Clara Mack' - white flowering in long clusters later than others; 'Pondside Blue' - light blue flowers.

**Related species:** Japanese Wisteria (*Wisteria floribunda*) is the showiest of the species; many cultivars; however, it is not flowerbud hardy in Wisconsin; the vines will grow quite vigorously but will never flower.



'Clara Mack'

Credits: Photos from: [www.midwestlandscapeplants.org](http://www.midwestlandscapeplants.org) and various other .edu websites unless noted. Text from: "Manual of Woody Landscape Plants" by Michael Dirr; "Tree Identification Characteristics (abridged)" from the University of Illinois Extension;