**Passiflora incarnata**
[pass-iff-FLOR-uh in-kar-NAH-tuh]

**Family:** Passifloraceae

**Names:** passiflora, maypop, passion vine, Maracuja, Passionfruit, Granadilla, Purple granadilla, Apricot vine, passionaria, granadita; Coanenepilli (Nahuatl); poochil, kansel-ak (Maya); maracuyá

**Description:** A vine on a woody, hairy stem that hangs on twirling tendrils. The length can go to 30 feet long. The flowers are white or pale lavender, with pink or purple calyx, 2-3 inches across. The outer rings (corona) have pink or purple filaments, 5 stamens with hammer-shaped anthers surround the 3-part style; reddish stigmas emanate from the flower's center. The leaves are deeply lobed, toothed and 4-6 inches long. The fruit is edible, yellow, oval and about 2 inches in diameter. It blooms July to September. It takes 2-3 years to flower.

**Cultivation:** A perennial hardy to zone 6 and sometimes zone 4 with heavy mulching.

Passionflower grows in relatively poor sandy and acidic soils but does a little better with some fertilizer. Apply a small amount of slow release fertilizer like cottonseed meal when you plant. If soil is too rich it produces fewer flowers. It does require good drainage, and will need to be irrigated in the dry west. Propagate at seed, cuttings, divisions or layers. Seeds germinate in 3-5 weeks and benefit from high heat. Cuttings root in 3-6 weeks and benefit from misting and bottom heat. Divisions need to have some of the main tuber attached otherwise they are just like a cutting. Layering fairly easy but only gets a few plants. Cuttings are best taken in the late summer or early fall.

The above ground parts of the plant are harvested when it is in flower. You get one harvest a year and each plant will produce indefinitely. The plants multiply and spread as they age so the older the patch the greater the harvest.

**History:** Passionflower was first cultivated by Native Americans for its edible fruit. Spanish conquerors first learned of passionflower from the Aztecs of Mexico who used it as a sedative to treat insomnia and nervousness. It was named *flos passionis* or *flor de las cinco llagas* (flower of the five wounds). The plant was taken back to Europe where it became widely cultivated and introduced into European medicine. The unusual construction of its whitish violet flowers caused Spanish missionaries to name this plant with reference to elements of the passion of Christ: Its coronal threads were seen as a symbol for the crown of thorns, the curling tendrils for the cords of the whips, the five stamens for the wounds, the three stigmas for the nails on the cross, the ovary for the hammer, and the five petals and five sepals of the flower for the ten "true"
apostles. Passionflower is considered a symbol of faith and piety and is the state flower of Tennessee.

Its traditional uses, in American aboriginal medicine, by the Cherokees of the southern Allegheny mountains, the Houmas of Louisiana, and the Aztecs of Mexico, are well documented and predate its entry into conventional American and European medicine. It was introduced into conventional North American medicine in the mid-1800s, from Europe, or through Native or slave use in the South, and possibly through all of these avenues. Today, passionflower is official in the national pharmacopeias of Egypt, France, Germany, and Switzerland, and also monographed in the British Herbal Pharmacopoeia and the British Herbal Compendium, the ESCOP monographs, the Commission E, the German Standard Licenses, the German Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia, and the Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the United States.

The Aztecs called the plant “snake tongue” and used it in remedies for snakebite, fevers, and other ailments. It was reported that the Spanish and the native Mexicans enjoyed sipping the juice, which relieved them of stomach pains.

**Constituents:** Ascorbic-acid, Beta-carotene, Calcium, Carotenoids, Catalase, Citric-acid, EO, Ethyl-butylate, Ethyl-caproate, fiber, Flavonoids, Iron, Malic-acid, N-hexyl-butylate, N-hexyl-caproate, Niacin, Pectin-methylesterase, Phenolase, Phosphorus, Potassium, Protein, Riboflavin, Sodium, Thiamin, Water, Xanthophylls, 0.8–2.5% apigenin and luteolin glycosides, vitexin, isovitexin and their C-glycosides, kaempferol, quercetin, and rutin; indole alkaloids (0.01–0.09%), mainly harman, harmaline, harmine; coumarin derivatives; cyanogenic glycosides (gynocardin); fatty acids (linoleic and linolenic); gum; maltol; phytosterols (stigmasterol); sugars (sucrose); and a trace of volatile oil.

**Energetics:** bitter/cool

**Organs/Meridians affected:** heart, liver

**Medicinal Uses:** The leaves of passion flower are an ingredient in many European pharmaceutical products to treat nervous disorders, such as heart palpitations, anxiety, convulsions, epilepsy and sometimes high blood pressure. They have been shown to make a nonaddictive sedative that relaxes the nervous system. Passion flower seems especially helpful when physical or mental strain results in insomnia or stress. While it is not a strong pain reliever and it may take a while for its effects to be noticed, it seems to have a lasting and refreshing effect on the nervous system. It is used to prevent spasms from whooping cough, asthma, and other diseases. The dried herb is also used for Parkinson’s disease, hysteria, and shingles. The unusual fruit has been historically considered to be a sedative.

In Germany, passionflower is used as a component of prepared sedative (in combination with lemon balm and valerian root) and cardiotonic (in combination with hawthorn) nonprescription drugs in various dosage forms including coated tablets, tinctures, and infusions. It is also used in German homeopathic medicine to treat pain, insomnia related to neurasthenia, and nervous exhaustion. In German pediatric medicine, it is used as a component of Species nervae pro infantibus (sedative tea for children), which contains 30% lemon balm leaf, 30% lavender flower, 30% passionflower herb, and 10% St. John's wort herb. It is also a component of a standard Commission E fixed formula "Sedative Tea," which contains 40% valerian root, 30% passionflower herb, and 30% lemon balm leaf. In the United States, passionflower is used as a sedative component of dietary supplement sleep aid formulations. It was official in the fourth (1916) and fifth (1926) United States National Formulary and removed in 1936. It was also an approved OTC sedative and sleep aid up until 1978.

Very few pharmacological studies have been undertaken, though its central nervous
system sedative properties have been documented, supporting its traditional indications for use. The approved modern therapeutic applications for passionflower are supportable based on its history of use in well-established systems of traditional and conventional medicine, pharmacodynamic studies supporting its empirically acknowledged sedative and anxiolytic effects, and phytochemical investigations.

German pharmacopeial grade passionflower must be composed of the whole or cut dried aerial parts, collected during the flowering and fruiting period, containing not less than 0.4% flavonoids calculated as hyperoside. Botanical identity must be confirmed by thin-layer chromatography (TLC) as well as by macroscopic and microscopic examinations and organoleptic evaluation. Purity tests are required for the absence of pith-containing stem fragments greater than 3 mm in diameter and also for the absence of other species. The British Herbal Pharmacopoeia requires not less than 15% water-soluble extractive, among other quantitative standards. The French Pharmacopoeia requires not less than 0.8% total flavonoids calculated as vitexin by measuring the absorbance after reaction. The ESCOP monograph requires that the material comply with the French, German, or Swiss pharmacopoeias.

The herb was introduced into United States medicine in 1867 as a sedative and was listed in the National Formulary from 1916 until 1936. A sedative passion flower chewing gum was even marketed in Romania in 1978. In 1990, a marked increase in passion flower sales was assumed to be a result of consumer concern over using the amino acid L-tryptophan as a sedative and sleep inducer. The Commission E approved the internal use of passionflower for nervous restlessness. The British Herbal Compendium indicates its use for sleep disorders, restlessness, nervous stress, and anxiety. Other uses include neuralgia and nervous tachycardia. The German Standard License for passionflower tea indicates its use for nervous restlessness, mild disorders of sleeplessness, and gastrointestinal disorders of nervous origin. It is frequently used in combination with valerian and other sedative plants. ESCOP indicates its use for tenseness, restlessness, and irritability with difficulty in falling asleep.

In the American Southwest it is used as a reliable tranquilizer and relaxant for irritability, restlessness, insomnia and anxiety. It relieves muscle and intestinal tightness and cramps, and is considered safe even for small children. Reduces the arterial tension of high blood pressure in the middle-aged.

HOMEOPATHIC: Homeopaths use *Passiflora incarnata* for restlessness, exhaustion, insomnia, worry, overwork, convulsions, nocturnal, coughs and asthma.

**Properties/Actions:** Nutritive, Sedative

**DOSAGE:** 4–8 g per day of cut herb; Dried herb: 2 g, three to four times daily; Infusion: 2 g in 150 ml water, three to four times daily. Fluidextract 1:1 (g/ml): 2 ml, three to four times daily. Tincture 1:5 (g/ml): 10 ml, three to four times daily. Native dry extract 5:0–6:0 (w/w): 0.3–0.4 g, three to four times daily.

**Toxicity:** No restrictions known. No interactions with other drugs known.

**Ritual Uses:** Brought into the home, passionflower calms and brings peace. Sprinkle it over the doorstep to keep harm from entering. Carry it to win friends and increase charisma. Place it in power bundles and love spells to attract love. Burn it in incense to promote understanding or in ritual incense when celebrating the Autumn Equinox.

**Culinary Uses:** Passion fruit, also known as maypops, is made into commercial drinks. South American use passion flower in cocktails, fruit punch, and dessert dishes, to top ice cream and to make a very popular soup. Australians also use passion fruit and cultivate it commercially. The flavor is described as a combination of pineapple, apricot, guava and banana—with a hint of lime. Edible fruit of
certain types of passion-flower can be purple or yellow. They have a tranquilizing effect on your body. Eat them before you go to sleep and you will dream sweet dreams. You can store them for a few days in the refrigerator. Passion fruits are mostly sold when they are ripe. Contain vitamin B, C and a lot of iron. Most passion fruit connoisseurs prefer the yellow variety. The highly fragrant passion fruit is unmistakably tropical. About the size and shape of a large egg, passion fruit has a tough shell. Inside the 1/4-inch shell, juicy, yellow-orange pulp is filled with edible seeds about the size of grape seeds. The famous Australian dessert, Pavlova, named for the Russian ballerina, is customarily topped with passion fruit pulp including seeds. Don't try to substitute passion fruit juice for passion fruit pulp in recipes. The juice is sweetened, diluted, and may contain other fruit. The results will be disappointing. If you warm passion fruit pulp, the seeds can be removed with a sieve. Most people, however, do not find the seeds objectionable. Passion fruit pulp is good in marinade, sherbet, juice, salad dressing, and as dessert topping for ice cream, cake, and cheesecake.

Passionfruit is catching on as a popular drink in both industrial and developing countries and a new fruit juice may be hitting the American market in the near future. Scientist have created a new fruit in a 20 year old research project, called "Passion Pops," by cross breeding the tropical Passiflora edulis with its US relative, Passiflora incarnata and is producing tennis-ball sized fruits. The fruits range in color from yellow to green, dark maroon and purple. One of the benefits of the new fruit is that it will grow farther north than the traditional US passionfruit and provide an alternative to farmers who have been hurt by winter freezes of citrus crops. Several US-based juice companies have expressed interest in the new fruit and some new juice products may be on the market in the near future.

Recipes:

Passion Fruit Sorbet
Serves: 2 - 8 oz portions
Yields: 16 oz

3 cups passion fruit puree
3 tbsp tequila, white
½ cup granulated sugar
3 fl oz water
½ pt strawberries, sliced

To make a simple syrup, combine the sugar and water, bring to a boil and simmer until the mixture is clear. Remove from heat and cool. Mix the passion fruit purée with the tequila and simple syrup. Pour into an ice cream machine or a sorbet maker, and freeze according to the manufacturer's directions. Transfer to a container and freeze until serving time. Place the sorbet in the refrigerator for 15 minutes before serving to soften slightly. To serve, divide the strawberry slices into 4 portions. Arrange 2 portions over the bottom of each dessert glass. Scoop the sorbet over the strawberries and cover with the remaining berries.

Peach, Papaya, & Passion Fruit Soup
3 cups sliced peaches, fresh or frozen
1 cup papaya juice
1 cup passion fruit juice
1/2 cup vanilla rice milk
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
3 tablespoons peach brandy (optional)

Chop 1 cup of peaches and set aside. In a food processor or blender, puree remaining peaches with papaya juice. Transfer to a mixing bowl and whisk in passion fruit juice, rice milk, lemon juice, and brandy, if desired. Serve chilled, topped with reserved chopped peaches. Makes 6 servings.

Lemon chiffon cake with passion fruit mousse and shaved white chocolate
Serves Eight
-for the chiffon cake
½ cup Granulated sugar
7 each Egg whites
1 cups Granulated sugar
1 ½ cups All purpose flour
1 Tbsp. Baking powder
4 each Egg yolks
½ cup Peanut oil
3 oz. Water
2 Tbsp. Vanilla extract
for the lemon syrup
1 cup Granulated sugar
1 cup Water
½ cup Fresh squeezed lemon juice

-for the passion fruit mousse
5 each Eggs, separated
1⅛ cups Granulated sugar
½ cup Passion fruit puree (reserve 4 Tbsp.)
17 oz. Mascarpone cheese
1 Tbsp Granulated gelatin

-for the passion fruit sauce
½ cup White wine
¼ cup Mirin
½ cup Granulated sugar
½ each Mango, ripe, peeled and sliced
1 cup Passion fruit puree
½ each Lime, juiced

-to assemble and plate the cake
1 Lb. White chocolate
2 oz. Vegetable oil
2 Each Fresh passion fruit
¼ cup Edible flowers

Preparation

-for the chiffon cake
Place the egg whites into the bowl of an electric mixer and whip until foamy. Gradually add ½ cup of sugar and whip to medium-soft peak. Combine the remaining cup of sugar with the flour and baking powder and sift together twice. Combine the egg yolks, peanut oil, water and vanilla extract and stir into the dry ingredients one cup at a time. Fold 1/3 of the whipped egg whites into the batter mixture then fold the result into the remaining whipped egg whites. Butter and flour two 10" spring form pans and divide the batter evenly between the two. Bake at 300 F. for 15 to 20 minutes then check to see if the cake will pull away from the sides of the pans. Cool and remove from the cake pans.

-for the lemon syrup
Combine the sugar and water in a suitable pot and bring to a boil. Cool and add the lemon juice. Reserve.

-for the passion fruit mousse
Place the egg yolks into the bowl of an electric mixer with the sugar and whip until fluffy. Decrease the speed and slowly add the mascarpone cheese (initially drop the bowl position if you have that type of mixer). As the mixture softens, bring the bowl back up and add the passion fruit puree and mix until smooth. Place the egg whites into the bowl of an electric mixer and whip until foamy. Gradually add ¼ cup of sugar and whip to very stiff peaks but not dry. Fold the puree and cheese mixture into the whites until combined. In a small pot, bloom the gelatin in warm water. Drain and add the reserved 4 Tbls. of puree and heat until the gelatin melts. Combine with the above mixture and mix well. Chill and reserve.

-for the passion fruit sauce
Combine the wine, mirin and sugar in a small sauce pan. Heat to a simmer and reduce by half. Add the mango and the passion fruit puree and continue to simmer until the mango is soft. Puree in the blender and add the fresh lime juice.

-to assemble and plate the cake
Slice each chiffon cake into two 1/2" thick layers evenly across the equator. Discard the remainder from the top. Place one layer into the bottom of a clean 10" spring form pan and soak lightly with the lemon syrup. Spoon roughly two cups of the mousse onto the cake and spread around evenly. Repeat in the same with the next two layers. Left over mousse will be used in the next step. Chill overnight in the refrigerator.

Melt the white chocolate in a double boiler and stir in the vegetable oil. Mix well and pour enough onto the flat surface of a wax paper lined baking sheets so that the chocolate forms a layer about 1/16" thick. Spread out evenly with an offset spatula. Chill. When the chocolate hardens, cut it into 2" by 4" shingles and peel from the waxed paper. Spread a thin layer of mousse around the sides of the cake and stick the shingles to the mousse, shiny side out. Fill the cake top with shavings of white chocolate and slice the cake into eight pieces. Place onto serving plates with two ounces of
sauce and a few seeds from the fresh passion fruit. Garnish with fresh flower petals.

**Mango and Passion Fruit Fool**

2 medium very ripe mangos  
¼ pt double cream  
lime juice  
5 oz thick Greek yoghurt  
6 ripe passion fruit

Peel the mangos and cut into large chunks. Liquidize with lime juice in a blender. Whip the cream until it starts to thicken but stop well before it stands in peaks. Slice two of the passion fruit in half and rub them through a tea strainer to extract the juice. Gently but thoroughly stir the cream, mango puree and passion fruit juice into the yoghurt. Spoon into small wineglasses and chill for up to an hour. Just before serving cut the remaining fruit in half and squeeze the seeds and pulp on top of each fool.

**Passion Fruit Butter**

¼ cup fresh passion fruit juice  
⅓ cup orange juice  
1 tablespoon sugar  
½ cup softened butter

Combine juices and sugar in a medium saucepan. Heat to boiling. Reduce heat to medium-high for about 10 to 15 minutes or until only ½ cup of the mixture remains. Remove from heat. Slowly whisk butter in small amounts until all of the butter is incorporated. Makes about 1 cup.

**Crepe Soufflé with Ginger and Passion Fruit**

8 crepes  
10 g Flour  
10 g Cornstarch  
3 Egg yolks  
60 g Sugar  
15 g Crystallized ginger  
125 g Passion fruit puree  
125 ml Milk  
4 Egg whites  
250 ml Raspberry coulis

Prepare the crepe batter and refrigerate for 20 to 30 minutes. In a nonstick frying pan, make 8 crepes. Set aside. Sift the flour and cornstarch together into a medium bowl. Place the egg yolks and sugar in a mixing bowl. Whisk vigorously for several minutes until the consistency is frothy. Fold in the flour and cornstarch. Continue whisking until the mixture becomes smooth and homogenous.

Using a chefs knife, finely chop the crystallized ginger. Add this to the egg and flour mixture. Combine the passion fruit puree and the milk in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Pour the boiling mixture onto the eggs and ginger, while beating constantly. Return to the saucepan and bring to a boil. Continue to whisk. Cook until the sauce thickens to a creamy consistency.

Remove from the heat and allow to cool until lukewarm. In a medium bowl, whip the egg whites into stiff peaks. Using a rubber spatula, fold 1/4 of the egg whites into the cream. Carefully add the rest of the egg whites. Fill the center of each crepe with the ginger soufflé mixture. Fold the edges of the crepe over to make a half-circle. Refrigerate.

**Passion Fruit Chiffon Pie**

1 Tbsp gelatin  
¼ cup water  
¼ cup sugar  
4 eggs, separated  
½ cup frozen passion fruit juice, thawed  
6 Tbsp sugar  
1 baked 9 inch pie shell  
1 cup heavy cream, whipped

and continue beating whites till they are stiff. Fold thick passion fruit-gelatin mixture into egg whites. Pour into cooled baked pie shell. Chill till firm. Top with whipped cream.

**Passion Fruit Sangria**

3 cups pineapple juice  
1 cup white grape juice  
1 cup passion fruit juice  
¼ cup fresh lime juice  
1 bottle sweet white wine  
12 ounces ginger ale

Combine first 5 ingredients in a large pitcher; chill. Add ginger ale just before serving; stir gently.

**Fruity Tooty Smoothie**

1 medium-large banana cut into chunks  
1 cup of passion fruit juice  
½ cup of milk (your choice as to fat percentage)  
1 teaspoon of pure vanilla extract  
3 -4 ice cubes

Place the banana, juice, milk, vanilla, and ice cubes in the blender. Cover and blend until frothy. Pour smoothie into 2 glasses.

**Passion Fruit and Angelica Syllabub**

6 passion fruit  
1 Tbsp chopped crystallized angelica plus more to decorate  
grated rind and juice of 2 limes  
½ cup white wine  
1/3 cup confectioners’ sugar  
1 ¼ cups heavy cream  
2/3 cup thick-set natural yogurt

Scoop out the flesh, seeds and juice of the passion fruit and divide between 6 serving dishes. Place the crystallized angelica in a food processor with the lime rind and juice, and blend to a purée. In a large bowl, mix the lime purée with the wine and sugar. Stir until the sugar is dissolved. Whip the heavy cream until it begins to form soft peaks and then gradually beat in the wine mixture—the cream should thicken slightly. Whisk in the yogurt. Spoon the cream mixture over the passion fruit, and refrigerate until ready to serve. Decorate with more crystallized angelica before serving. (Encyclopedia of Herbs and Spices)

**References:**

A Druid’s Herbal, Ellen Evert Hopman, Destiny Books, 1995;  

**Resources:**

Companion Plants, [www.companionplants.com](http://www.companionplants.com)  
Crimson Sage, [http://www.crimson-sage.com](http://www.crimson-sage.com)  
Plants