THIS MONTH’S ISSUE  Passiflora ‘Poseidon’.
The early history of Passiflora.
Reunion Island Passiflora.
Passiflora UK Newsletter.
History of Czech Passiflora growing.
Passiflora recipes and more.
Letter From the Editor

The role of Facebook must be acknowledged. Facebook has become a behemoth in social, cultural, technological, economic, and even political spheres. For millions of individuals it has become a primary means of communication. For some countries it has been a catalyst for revolutions. Movies have been made about it (most notably “The Social Network”). But why write about it in a journal about Passiflora? The answer is simple: the role of Facebook specifically in the Passiflora community cannot be overestimated.

As a means for connecting Passiflora enthusiasts - amateur to expert - Facebook stands on the shoulders of giants. The Passiflora Society International, the online L-list, and numerous other online forums have been connecting Passiflora enthusiasts since Facebook’s creator, Mark Zuckerberg, was in diapers. When he did start Facebook in 2004, though, he started a phenomenon that has outstripped any expectations anyone ever had. One of the editors of this journal joined Facebook just a few months after its inception in 2004 and has watched it evolve from a small directory of college students in the Northeastern US, to now being the dominant international forum for most social networking. As of July 2011, Facebook boasted over 750 million active users. They engage in networking spanning virtually every known major culture, subculture, personal interest, the arts, inside jokes, and yes even Passiflora.

The Passiflora group on Facebook was started by Myles Irvine in 2007, and has grown in logarithmic fashion. It has become the major hub for Passiflora enthusiasts worldwide with over 800 users and 1,600 pictures as of July 2011. People around the world utilize the Facebook Passiflora group for help with everything from learning the basics about these marvellous plants, to assistance with difficult identification questions, to discussing the finer points of their taxonomy and genetics, to uploading pictures of new hybrids, to simply sharing excitement about a new flower in bloom or fruit with good flavor or viable seeds. Though English is the dominant language, French, German, and Spanish are not uncommon, and other languages make occasional appearances. New friendships and collaborations evolve on a daily basis, many of them across thousands of miles. The tangible results so far include open sharing of images, plants, seeds, and information.

The burgeoning Passiflora social network has already grown dramatically because of Facebook and is likely to continue to do so. Easy access to a large community of Passiflora enthusiasts from anywhere in the world with an internet connection has drawn an ever-increasing number of people into a love of Passiflora and a commitment to their preservation both in collections and in the wild. It is hard to imagine that together we will not improve the odds. See you on Facebook.

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A lovely history from the early 1900’s to the present day.
In the late spring of 2010 we had 189 Passiflora species and 112 cultivars, and when varieties were taken into account the total was 339 taxa. Sadly this number has been reduced by the cold spell in December last year when one of our green houses that is frost protected recorded -6°C and now stands at 283 taxa.

The trip to French Guiana with Christian Feuillet, Maurizio Vecchia and friends in 2009 proved very successful and all the cuttings that we were able to collect during our trip soon rooted when I arrived back in the UK. Having tried several times before to cultivate plants from FG with rather mixed success I decided to cultivate all these new taxa in ericaceous compost and only water with rainwater. This proved most successful and in spite of a cold snap in January 2010 we managed to overwinter all the young plants. During the late summer and early autumn *P. davidii* Feuillet, *P. curva* Feuillet and *P. fanchonae* Feuillet all produced flower buds. *P. curva* flowered continuously until the middle of December and set several fruit when crossed with *P. vitifolia* Kunth. Sadly the exceptionally cold nights of December caused *P. davidii* and *P. fanchonae* to abort their flower buds and both plants perished in early January 2011, having only been subjected to overnight air temperatures as low as 6°C with a minimum soil temperature of 10°C. On the plus side, cuttings of all these species seem to be just hanging onto life.
In 2010 Ron Boender from Butterfly World, Florida sent over cuttings of a species believed to be *P. hyacinthiflora* Planch. & Linden found wild in Colombia. This is a slender weedy mountain species that likes cool moist conditions which are easy for UK to provide, even in summer. When it flowered it turned out to be *P. bicuspida* (Karst.) Mast. a very similar and closely related species.

In 1998 Phil Holmes and Tom Fox gave me seed of several *Passiflora* including *P. biflora* L. from Playa Ventana, Costa Rica. When my plant was about 20 cm tall I got quite excited, the leaves were very different from any *P. biflora* I had ever seen, a new species I thought! So with fastidious attention I tended my plant and willed it to flower. Did it flower? Oh no! The next year, after nearly losing it in the winter, I tried again hoping that a larger plant was more likely to flower, but did it flower? Oh no! In subsequent years I tried growing it in cooler, mountain like conditions, in very hot and sunny conditions, and in very humid conditions, and did it flower? Oh no! I tried for ten years to get it to flower, and even asked Tom for more seed which he kindly sent. They grew and flowered and turned out to be true *P. biflora*. So I left my plant to its own devices and didn’t pay much attention to it. Last year it escaped with a few of its vigorous shoots finding holes in its polythene tent where it had overwintered. The conditions outside the tent were much cooler with more sunlight, but the roots of the plant were in lowland tropical temperatures of 25°C. Yes, as you’ve probably guessed, it flowered and flowered and flowered, and set lots of fruit. It wasn’t a new species as I had hoped but *P. talamancensis* Killip which actually was new to me! If anyone would like seed I’ll send some to the seed bank.
In 2008 we built a large glasshouse for butterflies and planted it with quite a few *Passiflora* species including *P. adenopoda* DC. In the summer of 2010 our plant was large and flowering well. It self-pollinated and is now laden with fruit which should ripen to a deep pink. This colour is unusual for species in subgenus Decaloba.

As the years have gone by my aims as a National Collection Holder have changed. We can no longer keep a living collection of all the known species and cultivars, there are just too many hybrids now, and Les King (*Passiflora* Cultivar Registrar) keeps publishing wonderful new cultivars every six months or so. In 1990 there were only 67 recorded interspecies cultivars but now there are 494, over 400 new cultivars in just 20 years.

In 1994 after a visit to Venezuela when I saw so many *Passiflora* species I had never seen before, I started a herbarium collection so that I could identify the living plants I collected at a later date. Some years later I had a disagreement with a friend over the identification of an old cultivar and the only way to resolve the disagreement was to find a herbarium specimen of the original plant. I was extremely fortunate in finding a herbarium specimen of the disputed taxa in the Royal Horticultural Society’s Herbarium at Wisley, but having also searched Kew’s Herbarium I realised that there are very few cultivars in British herbaria and none of the proliferation of new hybrids have vouchered specimens in any herbaria. That motivated me to make herbarium specimens of all the species and cultivars in our collection; we now have 959 herbarium sheets, with many “type and isotype” specimens of both species and cultivars.

So that there can be a permanent herbarium record of all cultivars we are asking for cuttings of all new hybrids from their breeders or custodians so we can cultivate the plant and make a permanent herbarium record for posterity. If any other collection holder has started a herbarium collection and wishes to collaborate with us, please get in touch.

Work on the *P. foetida* L. group of species is progressing, although a little slowly. I have photographed over 500 herbarium specimens from around the world but only about 10% of these sheets have any flowers, so identification of individual varieties becomes very difficult. We have received seed from Robert McPhail from several locations, and several well documented varieties from Jan Meerman in Costa Rica. Sincere thanks also to Doug Goldman, Ron Boender, Eric Wortman, Crystal Stone, Christian Houel, Francois Thiys, Elizabeth Peters, Richard Sutton, Yero Kuerthe, Cor Laurens, Jorge Ochoa and Fred & Sula Vanderplank for gifts of seed and cuttings. Most of the seed germinated well and the plants went on to flower and fruit. We are still looking for seed or cuttings of any species from Subgenus (Killip) *Dysosmia* and *Dysosmiodes* including any *P. foetida* variety from any location.

In 2008 Jorge Ochoa, Sula Vanderplank and I collected a *P. biflora* type *Passiflora* in Belize. The most noticeable difference of this plant was that it produced only one flower per leaf axil, not two like *P. biflora*. Its flowers were mauve and orange rather than white and yellow, but all the same resembled *P. biflora*. Luckily the plant had many ripe fruit and spare vegetative material for cuttings. Amazingly when cultivated from seed or cuttings the flowers became much paler and more *biflora* like, but the distinct differences in the leaf shape, leaf-laminar glands and stipules remained constant. Plants were grown by Ron Boender in Florida and Jorge Ochoa in California and by myself in the UK all with the same result: loss of flower colour. After consulting all the original descriptions and herbarium records of the species that E. P. Killip in his 1938 monograph recorded as synonymous with *P. biflora*, I concluded that the plant we had found was *P. transversa* Mast. Sara Edwards and I have written a paper removing *P. transversa* from synonymy with *P. biflora* which is due to be published later this year in Curtis’s Botanical Magazine.

Dr John Vanderplank was born in Tanzania. He founded the UK National Collection of *Passiflora* in 1984, and since that time has studied and conserved these plants.

www.butterfliesandmore.co.uk

*P. adenopoda* © 2011 John Vanderplank

*P. adenopoda* fruit © 2011 John Vanderplank
Reunion
Passionflowers on Reunion Island

Reunion Island is not well known, therefore I will briefly introduce it to readers before describing the Passiflora species which grow there.

Before you start scanning your globe in vain let me help, this tiny spot is in the Southern Hemisphere in the South-Western Indian Ocean. Our closest neighbors are respectively Mauritius, 200km (124 mi) to the East, and Madagascar, 600km (372 mi) to the West. I bet you can now figure out more easily where I am writing from! To be even more precise, Reunion is at 21°07’ South latitude and 55°32’ East longitude. Together with Mauritius, (under British rule until independence in 1968), and Rodrigues Island, (belonging to Mauritius, 570km or 350m East of the latter), we form the Mascareignes archipelago named after Pedro de Mascarenhas, a Portuguese navigator credited with the discovery of these islands in the early 16th century.

Reunion was first occupied by French people while it was still a desert island around the year 1642. It slowly evolved to be a French colony and a French department in 1946, so although Paris is about 10000km (6200 mi) away this is French land. Of course the setting is tropical, and though many people come from France, there are also inhabitants from several other places including Africa, Madagascar, China and India, making it an amazing melting pot.
Apart from the population it can be compared to Hawaii, although smaller with a total area of 2512 sq km (1560 sq mi). It is a volcanic island hosting one active volcano, Piton de la Fournaise. The highest spot is 3069m (10069ft) high and is called ‘Le Piton des Neiges’ (Snow Peak), though you will not see snow there. The island has an overall round shape, with the West coast protected from eastern winds by the mountains making it rather dry, while the East coast gets much more rain and the whole island gets soaked during the cyclone season. The wide diversity of climates and micro-climates allows for a large number of plants to grow, with a high level of endemism. Although the island when free of men was an Eden for many animal species such as parrots, tortoises, solitaires (the local ‘dodo’), this and so on, all were exterminated or eaten by sailors and the first settlers. On the other hand, the vegetable kingdom offered very little to eat besides the heart of endemic palm trees, Dictyosperma album, the “Hurricane Palm”, and Acanthophoenix rubra, the “Barbel Palm”, which are both now gone from the wild. A number of plants to grow, with a high level of endemism. Although the island when free of men was an Eden for many animal species such as parrots, tortoises, solitaires (the local ‘dodo’), this and so on, all were exterminated or eaten by sailors and the first settlers. On the other hand, the vegetable kingdom offered very little to eat besides the heart of endemic palm trees, Dictyosperma album, the “Hurricane Palm”, and Acanthophoenix rubra, the “Barbel Palm”, which are both now gone from the wild.

The first one may be considered a “not so bad guy”, as it produces edible fruit, though they usually are rather despised and enjoyed mostly by birds and trappers like me. It is found all over the West coast of the island as it prefers dry areas. Although very common and found in most tropical locations it is nonetheless interesting because it is so variable. Indeed John Vanderplank mischievously called it P. variabilis in his book Passion Flowers, First MIT Press second edition 1996. Leaves are usually either 3 or 5-lobed, hairy, pale green, with a fetid smell of decay when crushed, sometimes described as smelling like a damp goat. Flowers range from white to pink, purple, dark rose or even bluish. On Reunion they are pale pink with purple corona filaments, though I once found a pure white one in a ravine of the North. They are surrounded by rather decorative dissected bracts which will later close around the fruit. This can be yellow, orange or red, the size of a pea or larger, containing a grayish sweet edible pulp and numerous flat seeds. Called on Reunion ‘poc-poc’ which describes the sound made if you crush the fruit. It is considered a weed and never purposely grown (except by some maniacs…).

* * *

The king of the passion fruits, by size and in my opinion by taste, is P. quadrangularis, the “Barbadine” or “Rehabadune”. The vine itself is classified in the heavyweight category, reaching 45m (150 ft) in Java, according to John Vanderplank, and is often grown here over a metallic pergola which it will soon cover, bearing 50 to 60 fruits at once. They can become pretty impressive, the size of Brazil or Australia but mostly as an additional crop by farmers. CIRAD, a French-based international crops development agency, created two promising hybrids, ‘Galea’ and ‘Malaya’ which proved more resistant to pests such as viruses, nematodes and various cryptogams than the ordinary species. Those are hybrids between Passiflora edulis and Passiflora edulis flavicarpa which have been further submitted to selecting. The fruits are usually the size of the yellow granadilla (Passiflora edulis flavicarpa) with a reddish purple skin color and sweeter than the purple granadilla (Passiflora). The yellow granadilla is also grown and offered for sale, but on a much smaller scale.

The sweet granadilla (P. ligularis) is also found seasonally in the markets and much enjoyed. This species comes from higher altitudes in Central and South America between 1000 and 3000m in elevation (3000 to 9000ft), hence requiring some coolness to grow correctly. Its large scented pendant flowers can be hidden amongst the large glossy leaves, though they will soon turn into egg-shaped fruits with a green-blush brittle skin turning orange when ripe, offering a sweet flesh.

Let us now turn to voluntarily introduced species, first edible ones then decorative ones. The passion fruits you will more readily find in street markets, in private gardens and even in the wild is P. edulis, the ‘Cremadille violére’. Probably the most commercially grown worldwide, it is one of the rare fruits produced on Reunion to be exported to Europe together with lychees, mangoes and pineapples. It is not grown on large scale like in...
A lesser known and enjoyed species is *P. maliformis*, locally called *Coque en Fer* (iron shell) and it is very seldom seen in gardens but appears here and there in the wild, mostly in the South at low elevations. It comes from the Caribbean and its introduction date on Reunion is unknown. It can reach several meters high and produces pendulous flowers similar to *P. ligularis*, but the fruit is so hard that one may need a stone to break it, and the flesh is rather deceiving, with an acid grape taste. The very last of edible passion fruits to be found on Reunion is the banana poka or taxo, curuba and locally “grenadille banane”. It is not a hybrid of granadilla and banana as some humorous readers may think. It is just that *P. tarminiana* indeed produces fruits looking very much like tiny bananas; elongated and yellow-orange with a soft skin. The inside is packed with seeds surrounded by an orange aril with a good taste but not suitable to be eaten out of hand because of the numerous seeds. It is best used for juice which is not the habit on Reunion. This explains why this fruit did not catch on with consumers though it was introduced by CIRAD in order to diversify agricultural produce in the mountains. Though it is a high altitude plant which originates from the Andes where it is found between 2000 and 3000 m (6000 to 9000 ft), it is nonetheless starting to disseminate in the wild with the help of birds. It is not yet a serious invader as is the case in Hawaii and New Zealand, however it has to be closely monitored. It is quite a shame because the dropping large pink flowers are really gorgeous when they turn supporting trees or fences into a pink cascade.

Now that stomachs are full let us feed your eyes. Although all the species mentioned so far, maybe with the exception of *P. suberosa*, have showy flowers themselves, a few species have been brought over solely for decorative purpose. Those are surprisingly very few when one considers the stupendously large choice of species and hybrids available nowadays. This is due to regulations raised by local nature protection bureaus who feared potential weeds and decided that as there were already several members of the family genus who proved to be invasive, the whole family should be forbidden to enter the island. This means that we can only get four of those jewels here which were imported before the ban. *P. miniata* whose bright red flowers are the ones you will more commonly find in gardens and which was erroneously sold for years as *P. coccinea*. Closely resembling this is *P. vitifolia*, which most people confuse with the first one but can be distinguished by its grape vine like three lobed leaves. *P. caerulea* has of course made its way here but as it does not take too well to the humidity and heat of lowlands it is not such a common sight. Lastly is *P. Amethyst* which is also quite rare although it does fairly well.

All in all, there is nothing exciting for those of you who ramble through the Amazon during your spare time or scan the Andes for new species, but I hope the amateurs and beginners will have enjoyed the reading! My next article should cover a trip to French Guyana which will certainly be more entertaining.

Jean-Jacques Segalen is a professional horticulturist specializing in seed production, living on tropical Reunion Island with a keen interest in vines and passion flowers.

*www.barbadine.com*

*Editor’s note. The *P. suberosa* species complex has been revised into a number of separate taxa by Kristen E. Porter-Utley. Revision of *Passiflora* Subgenus Decaloba Supersection Circa (Passifloraceae)2003,*
Like most people who do so, when we first began to breed *Passiflora*, it was simply to see if we could make something unique. A few successful hybrids later, a focus starts to develop. For everyone, the focus is different, but in our case it became trying to do crosses that had not been accomplished before. After a few more hybrids, of which a percentage ended up in the compost pile, our focus evolved and became much more specific. “Different” is not quite good enough anymore. “Better” has become our goal, though subconsciously at the start. Better in any way than both parents, whether it be the appearance of the flower, the scent, the blooming period, floriferousness, cold and/or heat tolerance, leaf appearance, or even the overall growth and vigor of the plant. Before we had even set these parameters, we created this hybrid *P. ’Poseidon’*, but thankfully it conformed to these guidelines perfectly.

The maternal parent is an unnamed hybrid of *P. umbilicata* and *P. tucumanensis*. It is similar to Henk Wouters’ *P. ’Jutta’* of the same parentage, but is distinct in many ways. This hybrid has a small flower with a long blooming period and is both cold and heat tolerant, having survived in the ground at temperatures below 20 degrees, and continues to bloom even at over 100 degrees. It has viable pollen and makes a good mother as well. The fruit tastes wonderful, and is one of my all time favorite passion fruit. However, it has no scent, and could certainly be larger with more elaborate filaments.

*Cover Story*

*Passiflora ’Poseidon’*

(*P. umbilicata x P. tucumanensis*) x *P. sidifolia* A new hybrid by Eric Wortman and Crystal Stone
The paternal parent is *P. sidifolia*. It has a unique strong scent, unlike any other *Passiflora* we have smelled, and has a fairly large flower with wonderful corona filaments.

More obvious of that influence is the strong dark red to purple bracts that hold the bud, flower and fruit, and even stay on the plant after the flowers drop. The corona is large and curved much like *P. sidifolia*, and the entire flower is held pointing downward at an angle from the plant on 2-3 inch peduncles, unlike its father, which holds the flowers on short peduncles directly below the leaves, sometimes hiding the flower from view.

As with all new hybrids, there are unanswered questions which will only come in time. Are the fruits tasty? How long will it take them to ripen, as its mother can be as short as 45 days, and its father can take up to 9 months? At the time of this writing, the fruits are still immature at 60 days. Will it be as Boriflora as we hope? Will the pollen be viable?

Even with many questions unanswered, we feel that this is an improvement on both parents in many aspects, and hopefully next year we will learn that it is an improvement in even more.

Most of our hybrids have names derived from mythology or theology. This one is no exception. It immediately conjured up images of the sea with its mystery, depth, and character. As *Poseidon* was the God of the sea in Greek mythology, we thought the name befitting.

We hope to have this plant available for sale in mail order nurseries in the US by fall of 2012.

Eric Wortman and Crystal Stone have been growing *Passiflora* for over 10 years in Northern California. Their focus is currently on hybridization and the advancement of the *Passiflora* community.

**Website - www.bloomingpassion.com**

**Passion fruit Balls.**

1 lb. crushed vanilla wafers  
1 lb powdered sugar  
Shredded coconut  
1 stick butter or margarine  
3/4 cup Passionfruit (tart) or if not tart add 1/4 lemon juice  
1/3 cup finely chopped nuts, toasted almonds, walnuts, hazel nuts

Mix the ingredients and roll in to small balls, refrigerate covered in the refrigerator...they will keep several days in the refrigerator or freeze.

**Passion Bars.**

Yield: Makes 16 two-by-two-inch squares  
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter or margarine, softened  
1/4 cup confectioners’ sugar  
1/2 cup granulated sugar  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
2 eggs, beaten  
4 tablespoons fresh passion fruit juice (add some lemon or lime juice, up to 1 tbs, if the passion fruit juice is not tart). I use *P. edulis flavicarpa* juice which is always tart)  
Confectioners’ sugar, for dusting

**Cooking Directions**

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.  
In a bowl, blend together the 1 cup of flour, the butter, and the 1/4 cup confectioners’ sugar. Press this dough into a greased 8 x 8 inch pan. Bake for 15 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven, but leave the oven on.

While the dough base is baking, mix together the granulated sugar, the 2 tablespoons flour, the baking powder, eggs, and the passion fruit juice. When the base is removed from the oven, pour this lemon mixture over it and return the pan to the oven. Bake for another 20 to 25 minutes.

Cool in the pan. Cut into squares and sift confectioners’ sugar over all.

**Passion fruit snow drop cookies**

Yield: Yields about 3 dozen cookies.

These stay fresh for up to a week; reroll them in confectioners’ sugar before serving.

8 oz. unsalted butter, at room temperature  
2 1/2 cups confectioners’ sugar  
2 teaspoons tart passion fruit juice, add up to 1/2 tsp of lemon or lime juice if the juice is not tart  
Pinch salt  
2 2/3 cups all-purpose flour  
For Rolling:  
1 cup confectioners’ sugar

**Cooking Directions**

Heat the oven to 325 degrees F. Beat the butter and sugar together with a wooden spoon or a mixer until creamy. Add the passion fruit juice, and salt; mix until combined. Add the flour; mix until just blended. Shape the dough into 1-inch balls and set them 1 inch apart on ungreased or parchment-lined baking sheets. Bake until the cookies are light golden and give slightly when pressed, 18 to 20 min. Let the cookies cool slightly on the baking sheet; while still warm, roll them in confectioners’ sugar. Transfer to a rack to cool completely.
The history of the Passion flower

Almost 500 years ago a traveller with the imagination of a poet, perhaps a mendicant friar, set foot on a dangerous mission of salvation in a strange new world. Perhaps the pangs of hunger were great. Stavrianov was always a prospect, and he could not depend upon the natives, whose food supply was limited.

Let us visualize a hot summer noon, when the sun was full and the bees circulating. We see this reverent man, clothed in his heavy simple robe, reaching out along a jungle path and plucking from a vine a red or purple painted flower of showy parts, irresistible in its beauty, an almost 500 years ago a traveller with the imagination of a poet, perhaps a mendicant friar, set foot on a dangerous mission of salvation in a strange new world. Perhaps the pangs of hunger were great. Stavrianov was always a prospect, and he could not depend upon the natives, whose food supply was limited.

Examine the flower, turning it over in his poetic ear and mind’s eye. Perhaps he began to discuss this flower with others of his order. The Church was not reluctant to find messages in nature. This odd flower seemed to convey to the friars a useful tale of comfort and redemption.

Here was something they had been searching for, an enduring symbol of God in the new world that would help them carry the gospel to the native peoples. Moreover, it was much-sought evidence that the New Testament embraced people and lands unseen and undiscovered by Europeans at the time of Christ. This metaphor of botanical salvation was repeated by many, and in the course of time, it even reached the ears of the Pope.

The story of the discovery of the passion flower is steeped in the religious imagination, making it one of the most noticed of all plants discovered by explorers in the New World. To the believing mind of the sixteenth century, and to this religious man, the flower told the story of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and provided a message to the heathen. A delicate bloom usually lasting only for hours, it opens and vanishes, a challenge for the artist and fonder for the religious mind contemplating the brevity of life.

Much of what is known about the history of *Passiflora* is ably presented by Emil A. Kugler and Leslie A. King in the chapter “A history of the passionflower” in *Passiflora* (Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, 2004). We are indebted to them for laying out a path for further exploration.

New discoveries in its history, with a faux flower added to a Renaissance painting, along with purported Hebrew words, as well as some question as to whether some of the purveyors of the Christian flower were actually descendents of Conversos (Jews forcibly converted to Catholicism during the Inquisition) bring questions of ironic mystery and interpretation that require at least a one or two footnotes to the history of the flower. We can also add some Meso-American history from what may be the first printed mention of the flower, in the Aztec-Mexican work known as both the Libellus de Medicinalibus Indorum Herbis (little book of medicinal herbs of the Indians) or the Codex Badianus.

The first years of contact with Western Europe stamped the flower and its fruit with a symbolic identity that builds upon the story of the last days of the suffering Christ. The essential parts of the flower illustrated to the Church its raison d’être; the three stigmata the nails of the cross; the five stamen the wounds of the savior; the filaments the lashes of the whips of the Roman soldiers; the 10 petals and sepals the disciples of Christ, minus two who were in disfavor. (If these disciples were actually present at the cross, the New Testament gives no report).

Kugler and King state that the first reports to Europe of the passion flower came from explorer Cieza de León in 1533. A Spanish civil servant who wrote a history of Peru (which included Colombia), he described the “granadilla” as a delicious and fragrant fruit growing near the town of Cali, now one of the largest cities in Colombia. The word “granadilla” comes from the Spanish “granada” for pomegranate, the ancient Old World fruit, full of fleshy seeds, like the New World passion fruit. León’s flower is thought to be the species *Passiflora ligularis*, whose lemon-sized fruit are sweet and aromatic, exported and grown around the world. His early work can be found online at openlibrary.org and is mentioned on a page of botanist Francisco Hernandez Bertum Medicinarum Novae Hispaniae Theasaurus, published in 1648 and reprinted in 1992.

Cieza de León wrote:

“The banks of this river (the Lile) are well covered with fruit trees, amongst which there is one that is very delicious and fragrant called granadilla.”

A lovely pre-Columbian gold pendant of a passion flower from Palmira, Valle del Cauca, dated 200 B.C. - 200 A.D. is displayed in the Museo del Oro, Bogotá. The museum states it is “one of the few floral examples of pre-historic metalwork found to date.”

In addition, one can trace an interesting meso-American craftwork back to an early South American civilization. A Moche jug handle dating back to perhaps 400 A.D., with stylized fruits and leaves of what is described as a passion flower is exhibited at the Museo Larco de Lima.

The museum catalog states that the Moche jug handle shows the “tumbo” or fruit of the banana passion flower, one of a group of passion flowers native to the valleys of the Andes. The question of its identification is apparently still open, as the stylized leaves and the vine lead to questions. Museum cataloguer Isabel Collazos Ticona, in correspondence, says the museum still seeks experts to comment on its catalog. She describes the fruit as possibly a “sweet pepino” often represented on Moche pottery. The oblong fruit is also shaped like that of the coca, points out journalist Myles Irvine. To complicate interpretation, neither the coca or the pepino grow from a vine.

Among the passion flower “banana” species is *P. tripartita var. mollisima*, which has a beautiful light pink flower. Journal editor Myles Irvine has pointed out that the banana passion flowers, which are native to the valleys of the Andes, are about 3-4 inches long and are found widely in local markets. The flower is named for its shape rather than its taste. Originally thought to be one species, *P. mollisima*, now known as *P. tripartita var. mollisima*, others have now been identifying *P. teresminata*, which was named as a new separate species of banana passion flower by Coppens & Barney et. al. in “Passiflora teresminata, a new cultivated species of *Passiflora subgenus Tacsonia*.” Novon 11(1): 8-15. 2001. There are several other common *Tacsonia* species closely related to *P. tripartita var. mollisima*, others have now been identified including *P. teresmina*, *P. mucuna, P cumbadulensis* and *P. pinatistipula*. Another, *P. antiquoicenii*, is often called the red banana passion flower. All are thought to be hummingbird pollinated with the flowers varying from red to pink, occasionally white, and little or no corona filaments. It is unclear which of these is represented on the Moche jug.

The Mexican Mystery

The Cieza de León date of first mention, 1533, may be superseded by an earlier date if one takes into account a Mexican contribution. The native American-Spanish nexus took on new meaning there as the Spanish established institutions including schools. The first printing press in the New World was built in Mexico City in 1539. Conversion of the natives to Christianity was the goal, although this did not come without bloody rebellion against the clergy. A blood-curdling tale of pacification attempts and human sacrifice in Mexican provinces of Manche and Lacandon is told by Antonino de León Pinelo, a court reporter to the king.
in his 1639 Report, Made in the Royal Council of the Indies (Labyrinthos, 1986). It was Pinelo, a prolific chronicler, who later wrote that Peru contained the mythical Garden of Eden and the fruit of temptation had been the passion fruit.

At the same time, the Inquisition against the Jews had been exported from Spain, and its offices were not closed until 1820. As late as 1649, twelve crypto Jews who refused to convert to Christianity were strangled and burned publicly, and another burned alive.

Despite these thorny problems from the pernicious unbelievers, the Spanish thought they could not only save souls, but learn valuable secrets, some more precious than gold. The Old World had been decimated for hundreds of years by sickness and plague. The plague broke out periodically and killed more than 100 million Europeans from its inception in the Fourteenth Century. An estimated 80 percent of the population of Spain died. In the spring and summer of 1658, a year before Monardes published his book on herbal medicine, 8,000 citizens of his city lost their lives to the plague.

In Seventeenth Century Spain, the death toll was estimated at one and a quarter million. Spanish missionaries and medical emissaries were sent to seek new healing herbs. Medicine had lain moribund for centuries. The revered Greek physician Dioscorides (ca. 40-90 A.D.), who listed more than 4,000 herbal remedies, remained an authority in an age where germ theory was undiscovered and the four humours, unbalanced, stole one’s health away. In the “doctrine of signatures” promoted by the botanist Paracelsus (1493-1541) it was thought that a plant resembling a body part might cure what was wrong with a part. Thus a flower with heart-shaped petals might care what ailed the heart. Astrological botany was devised by a man named Nicholas Culpeper (1616-1654), with every disease caused by a planet and cured by an herb related to a planet.

The church tried its best to reconcile all aspects of science with religious dictates including the pedigree of the practitioner. For more than two centuries after the discovery of the New World, and even after mercantilism began to breach religious barriers, no one who could not prove himself a Christian was safe from inquisitorial powers. Even before that, sometime around 1320, the great poet Dante, himself a medical man and orthodox in his beliefs about the divine Church, consigned Dioscorides, Hippocrates, Avicenna and other pre-Christian, like Moses, Homer and Caesar to wander in limbo, aimlessly. They were condemned to inhabit a box-seat level of the inferno in Dante’s Divine Comedy, roaming aimlessly in the outer circle of Hell as the result of never having been baptized.

As explorers fanned out toward the New Golden Land, plundering for wealth, seeking the fountain of youth and the original Garden of Eden, transporting the first Indian slaves back to the Old World, they carried both the instruments of the Inquisition, and its refugees, with them. Whether the passion fruit was among the first plants sent back, perhaps, with the wondrous sweet pineapples transported by Christopher Columbus, history does not tell.

History does tell us that sailing within the ranks of explorers were conversos, or New Christians, many of them seeking new territory where they hoped to find safety from religious persecution. The Jews had been formally expelled from Spain the same year Columbus set sail from Spain.

These ships, guided by fallible humans, were regarded by some natives as transport for the gods. But there were not their gods. And the explorers, many of whom admired the naked social innocence of those they conquered, were appalled by customs which, included, in some instances, human sacrifice and cannibalism.

Salvaging the “savage” souls of the natives was a priority. Schools were set up to teach Christianity. Native muscle and talent was used to harvest crops and to build and decorate monasteries. Thus, the monastery at Malinalco, 115 kilometers southwest of Mexico City, was adorned with a rococo Aztec version of the passion flower, shown by Jeanette Favor Peterson in Paradise Garden Murals of Malinalco: Utopia and Empire in Sixteenth Century Mexico (University of Texas Press, 1993). The Spanish, of course, also wanted to know of the native peoples’ secrets of healing. As a product of collaboration, what appears to be the first botanical guide to the New World was produced.

The Libelus de Medicinalibus Indorum Herbis was written in Nahualtl by a native, Martín de la Cruz, and translated into Latin by Juan Badiano at the first Old World style school of higher learning in Mexico, the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, built by the Franciscan order to produce an indigenous priesthood among the Aztecs. The two authors were native born but given European names.

is thought by the majority of sources to be Passiflora porcelliun, although, as fate would have it, experts disagree. Paul D. Sorensen names this flower “the world’s rarest” native. Gates identifies this flower as “Dronteria contrayerba, or Passiﬁola mexicana.” Gates was also associated with Hopkins, through the Maya Society which he helped resurrect.

Both authors were working on an English translation of the rediscovered Vatican manuscript at the same time. Each apparently came up with a different interpretation of this plant. The history of the manuscript and its ethnobotanical role is discussed by Peter T. Furst in an essay “This Little Book of Herbs: Psychoactive Plants as Therapeutic Agents in the Badianus Manuscript of 1552” in Ethnobotany: Evolution of a Discipline by Richard Evans Schultes and Siri von Reis (Portland, Oregon: Dioscorides Press, 1995).

Gates’ 1939 book was reproduced by scholar Bruce Byland as An Aztec Herbal: The Classic Codex of 1552 (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2000). The introduction to the edition is helpful in understanding the story of therapeutic plants making their way into Europe.

Gates writes of the Aztec flower, depicted more roughly in the codex:

“Famous in Yucatan as the ixcabamblal as a stimulant and tonic, it owes its name to its primary reputation as an antidote against snake bites.”

And as a result, the curious reader will see several forks thrown into the road.

The Religious Transition

The Spanish doctor Nicolás Monardes (1493-1588), who never visited the New World but received faithful correspondence, was the first to provide to Europeans the story of the botanical as well as the religious significance of the passion flower, write Kugler and King. His works were translated into Latin, French and English and appeared in several editions including a reprint of a 1577 English edition as joyful News Out Of The Newfounde World (London: William Norton, 1970). Wrote Mordesantes, translate: “the plant that this fruit beareth is like to ivery, and so it runneth up and clingerth fast to anything that is neere to it, wheresoeuer it be set, it is faire when it hath fruite, for his greatness he is a particular beare and onely in one place, it is found, it catterth a flower like to a white Rose, and in the leaves he hath figures which are the thynge of the Passion of our lorde, that it semed as though they were painted with muche care, whereby the flower is more particular then any other that hath been seen. The fruite is the little graines which wee have spoken of, and when they are in season they be full of Licour, somewhat sharpe, and all full of seede, whiche are opened as one doth open an Egge, and the Licour is to bee supped up with great contentment of the Indians, and of the Spaniards. And when they have supped it up, many doe not feel pines in their stomakes, rather they say for the Belly, they seeme to be temperate, with some gloughes.”

A few years later, in 1590, Fray José de Acosta wrote about the granadilla in his Historia Natural de las Indias (reprinted by Duke University Press, 1973), edited by B. Mangan with introduction and commentary by Walter
The flower is so natural and almost alive. The crown of thorns and three nails, of a green and yellow color, representing the twelve apostles, who is not amazed? Of the Indians and concealed mysteries (translated by Kugler and King): Peru, Tucuman, and the State of Brazil. The poet wrote Rio de la Plata with Other Events of the Kingdoms of 19) as “Argentina and the Conquest of the Kingdom of the Kings” (with the name translated into English by Kugler and King). Reinforcing the religious message in 1602 was an epic poem, written in Spanish, by Martin del Barco-Centenera with the name translated into English by Kugler and King (p. 19) as “Argentina and the Conquest of the Rio de la Plata with Other Events of the Kingdoms of Peru, Tucuman, and the State of Brazil.” The poet wrote (translated by Kugler and King):

The flower of the granada or granadilla of the Indians and concealed mysteries. Who is not amazed? Representing the twelve apostles. Of a green and yellow color. The crown of thorns and three nails. The flower is so natural and almost alive. And now I admire it and so write it down.

Seven years later, in 1608, Spanish Jesuits would present the passion flower in its dried parts and with a drawing to Pope Paul V of the Borghese family, write Kugler and King, and shortly thereafter rough and mostly symbolic drawings of the flower circulated throughout Europe. It was typical of these drawings that the ring of five stamen formed into a stylized crown of thorns, and the three stigma were sometimes represented as blades or nails. More lifelike sketches were made as the demand for the flower spread to caretakers of the royal and clerical gardens in France, Italy and Spain in the early years of the century. Within the gardens of Europe a truer illustration came from a drawing of Passiflora incarnata in a catalog by French royal gardener Jean Robin.

Kugler and King ascribe a painting of a passion flower to illustrator Giovanni Fabri, working for a patron of the famous Accademia dei Lincei, published later as a pamphlet with a copperplate. Art historian and botanical expert Sam Segal identifies a Jesuit priest as the first artist who depicted a passion flower in a commercial painting. Daniel Seghers lived in Rome from 1625 to 1627 before returning to his home in Antwerp. His paintings, usually bright, painstakingly accurate floral wreaths surrounding a cartouche of religious figures painted by other artists, were in great demand and highly acclaimed. Segal writes in a private letter that the early works by Daniel Seghers with a Passion Flower are St. Ignatius Within Flower Garlands, Vatican Museum no. 40418; and Triumph of Love, a flower wreath encirclingputti, in the Louvre, no. 797. Both are illustrated in Hairs’, The Flemish Flower Painters of the XVIIth Century, 1985, figs. 51 and 54. Segal identifies individual flowers in paintings and examines the history of botany in art in Flowers and Nature: Netherlandish Flower Painting of Four Centuries (Hijink International b.v., Amsterdam 1990) with English translation by Ruth Koenig.

In a valuable contribution to botany, John Parkinson, gardener to Charles I, published the herbal Paradisi in Sole Paradisi Terrestris in 1629. Parkinson associated himself with the most famous herbalists of the time, and the fascinating story of his rise from poverty to eminence as grocer, apothecary and gardener in times of religious tumult is told by Anna Parkinson, a descendent, in Nature’s Alchemist: John Parkinson, Herbalist to Charles I (London: Francis Lincoln Limited, 2007).

His drawing of the flower was botanically accurate, but he also included an early Jesuit symbolic illustration to make a point that the Jesuits had exaggerated the flower. Despite the fact the queen was a faithful Catholic, and that the book was dedicated to her, Parkinson, in Paradisus (p. 393-4) attacked the religious significance given the flower by the Jesuits.

He wrote:

Some superstitious Jesuite would faine make men believe, that in the flower of this plant are to be seen all of the marks of out Saviour’s Passion; and therefore call it Flos Passionis; and to that end have caused figures to be drawn, and printed, with all the parts proportioned out, as thornes, nails, whippes, pillar, etc. in it, and all as true as the Sea burnes, which you may perceive by the true figure, taken to the life of the plant, and the figure set forth by the Jesuites . . . these bee their advantageous lies (which with them are tolerable, or rather pious and meritorious) wherewith they use to instruct their people: but I dare say, God never willed his Priests to instruct his people with lies; for they come from the Devill, the author of them.

By the early 1600s the Passiflora incarnata and its fruit had been discovered growing among the crops of the native Americans in the colony of Virginia. Its fruit was used by tribes in what is now the southeastern United States.

In North Florida, seeds of the fruit have been found in archaeological digs at Mission San Luis, where Apalachee Indians lived with the Spanish. The mission was torched by the English, in a raid from South Carolina, in 1704. One use of the plants may have been to make cakes. This information can be traced to Capt. Bernard Romans, a Dutch-born naturalist and surveyor who worked for the British, and who first printed in 1775 A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida. (Reprinted Gretna, La: Pelican Publishing Company, 1998).

He wrote that the Creek Indians “also prepare a cake of the pulp of the species of the passiflora, vulgarly called may apple . . . .”

The plant was also called the “maracock” by the native Americans and the British, and “granadillo” or variants by the Spanish. The Dutch in Brazil had called the passion flower plant “maracua.” The flower is known by the Guarani language spoken in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay in South America as “maruca” from which the name maracuja or maracujá is thought to have originated. It was also called “flos passionis” in Latin.

When Antonio de León Pinelo, announced that he had found the Garden of Eden...
at a confluence of rivers in Peru, he said that the passion fruit was, indeed, the one hanging from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. This theme followed some previous speculation through history that the true Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden boasted as its fruit the pomegranate. Written between 1645 and 1650, Pinelo’s book Paraíso en el Nuevo Mundo was not printed until the mid Twentieth Century, writes Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra in “How Derivative was Humboldt? in an essay in Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World, edited by Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

Herbalists, whether Catholic or newly Protestant, followed a religious path and Linnaeus in 1753 called the newfound western genus “Passiflora.” It fit in well with the theory of “the great chain of being,” each object, from humans and descending downward, reflecting the power of the Creator. The topmost power was represented in herbals, scientific books, legal and moral treatises and illustrations by the anagram for the name of the most Holy in Hebrew –YHVH. It usually appeared in a cloud at the top of the frontispiece of early botanicals by Clusius, Parkinson and others.

The rest of the story of the flower is not without a good deal of mystery; some of it discussed elsewhere by this author and in abbreviated form here, Much can be found on his website2 and related sites.

Art and the Possibility of Counterfeit

Sprouting from a red carnation held by the Madonna, a highly stylized passion flower has been regarded as a focal point of a particular Madonna and Child, at the Cincinnati Art Museum, painted by the Flemish artist Joos Van Cleve. The painting, it is the only Virgin and Child with passion flower painted during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries, or perhaps in any century, Van Cleve’s knowledge about the passionflower is doubtful, even if Antwerp were the bustling port it was, with ships transporting silks, metals and spices from around the world.

It is, of course, possible that word of the flower was transported to Europe through early chronicles, such as that of Charles V’s royal chronicler Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo’s 1535 La historia general de las Indias. Replete with eyewitness drawings of wondrous New World plants and animals, it is, most unfortunately; missing many manuscript pages. The latest take is found in a brilliant and valuable book by Kathleen Ann Myers, Fernandez de Oviedo’s Chronicle of America, (University of Texas Press, 2007). Then, too, it is possible that word of the passion flower and tentative descriptions were brought back by clergy who sailed with Cortez, or even, as mentioned previously, by Columbus. Perhaps the closest source to all of the traffic and gossip of the time was Peter Martyr, who did not travel to the New World but whose Decades de Orbe Novo, circa 1520, mentions the importance of acidic fruit in the New World, including the “granada” by which he probably meant the pomegranate, although it is possible he was speaking of passion fruit. Columbus had brought seeds of citrus fruit to the New World as well as sugar cane. Pomegranates were transported to the New World soon after Cortez conquered Mexico.

Given the probability that in 1535 no educated ear in Europe would have heard of this flower or its incipient symbolism, the anomaly in the Van Cleve painting was brought to the attention of the art museum by this writer. A museum curator subsequently in 2006 removed the painting from the wall and put it under the microscope. He surmised, from physical evidence of paint layering, that the passion flower was added to the Madonna and child somewhere between 70 and 100 years after the original was painted. Thus, the mystery was solved. The flower, in fact, was consistent with some of the early Seventeenth Century clerically-inspired drawings, but an exact copy with what appear to be bloody filaments has yet to be discovered by this writer. Some likely candidates appear here.

A further discovery by this author of what seems to be an Hebrew writing on the tunic of the virgin is discussed further here3 and associated websites.

Conversos, New Jews and the Passion Flower

Ironies exist in the history of the passion flower, as the victims of the Inquisition may have also been the propagators of this most Catholic flower.

In Spain and Portugal, and then in their colonies in the New World, those who practiced Judaism did so at the peril of their lives. Even those who were transported and were known as “New Jews” were suspected because of their Jewish blood. Many who adapted to Christianity were tested further by inquisitors. Physicist Garcia de Orta (ca 1501-1568) fled from Portugal to Goa to write his works on tropical medicine. The Inquisition followed him to India. Discovering that he was still a professing Jew when he died, the inquisitors exhumed his body and burned his bones. His sister met her fate in an auto-da-fé, burned alive before robed clerics.

Thousands of the Sephardim (the name for Spain in Hebrew was Sefarad) fled to Portugal, North Africa and Northern Europe. Some converted, and remained in Spain, always under suspicion. Others took flight aboard ships for the New World.

Historians tell us that one who left Spain may have been Dr. Francisco Hernández (1515-1587) translator of 37 books of Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder (CE 23-79). Hernández, a royal physician to King Philip of Spain, was sent to Mexico 1572-78 to study the miraculous plants of the new world which offered wondrous products like chocolate and tobacco, as well as cures for the diseases that plagued Europe.

Hernández became one of the first trained botanists in the New World, and his expedition the first scientific expedition there. During his time in Mexico (1572-1577) Hernández wrote 24 volumes on plants, one on minerals, one on fauna, and accumulated ten volumes of illustrations. Among the drawings in a 1650s edition of his work, published long after he died, are those of the passion flower. It may be that Hernández was the first botanically trained witness to draw and describe the flower.

The late scholar Simon Varey of UCLA, in his two volumes on Hernández, speaks of the age-long rumors that Hernández was a descendent of Conversos, or Jews who had been forced to adopt Christianity. Hernández was a graduate of the medical school at Alcalá 20 miles outside of Madrid, suspected as a haven of Conversos. Writes Varey, “the broad community in which Hernández lived and worked, that of Spanish medicine and science, included plenty of men who were functioning under cover.” For more information, see Searching the Secrets of Nature: The Life and Works of Dr. Francisco Hernández, edited by Varey, Rafael Chabrán and Dora B. Weiner and The Mexican Treasury: The Writings of Dr. Francisco Hernández, edited by Varey and translated by Chabrán, Cynthia L. Chamberlin and Varey. (Stanford University Press, 2000).
His work was variously lost and misplaced by a slew of editors and translators, partially printed after 1628 (perhaps), never printed completely, and much of what was original destroyed in 1671 in a fire at the Escorial, but the drawing of the flower appeared many years after his death in books under his name, particularly the edition by Recchi. With no law of copyright, and woodcuts being shared or copied indiscriminately throughout Europe, it is difficult to trace the provenance of early depictions of the flower. The sharing or plagiarizing of illustrations was rampant, as observed by Agnes Arber in her 1938 second edition of Herbs: Their Origin and Evolution: A chapter in the history of Botany 1470-1670 (Cambridge University press, 1938) While most of the herbal, printed by early presses contained a frontispiece with an illustration of their eminent authors, no likeness of Hernández is known to exist.

Oddy enough, the Madrid Edition called the Opera of Hernández, published in 1790, edited by Casimiro Gomez Ortego "from manuscripts that survive today in the Biblioteca Nacional and the Ministerio de Hacienda" raises some questions about Monardes, the first popularizer of the flower. The description of the granadilla in this book is almost sentence for sentence, translated, similar to that of the flower. The description of the granadilla in this book raises some questions about Monardes, the first popularizer of the flower. They say that this grows in the land of the Peruvians and that it is voluble and like ivy, that its flower is similar to a white rose, and that in its leaves one can see the figures of the instruments of the Passion of Christ.

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A Spanish translation of the Latin text was published in 1546, translated, similar to that of the flower. The description of the granadilla in this book raises some questions about Monardes, the first popularizer of the flower. The description of the granadilla in this book, is almost sentence for sentence, translated, similar to that of Monardes.

The stage of mankind, it provides much more than background, for this plant can be used as a key to understand much about the advent of the new ages of discovery and turn the key to the lockbox of history.

A former newspaper reporter and editor, Michael E. Abrams teaches media law and other journalism classes at Florida A&M University. He holds a doctorate from the University of Missouri. His academic research focuses on the scientific study of human subjectivity in communication. A member of the Passiflora Society, his curiosity about nature was piqued by his wild flower photography. He and his wife Rochel, a public school administrator, are empty-nesters in Tallahassee, with four offspring out and about. His main website is at http://www.flwildflowers.com.

Errors, if any, contained within this particular article are of course the responsibility of the author, alone, and will be corrected if brought to his attention. Much recent scholarship has been vital in telling this story.

I have not found a more intriguing story than that of the passion flower, and its twists and turns throughout the centuries. On the stage of mankind, it provides much more than background, for this plant can be used as a key to understand much about the advent of the new ages of discovery and turn the key to the lockbox of history.

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5. www.chivalricorders.org/nobility/nobjews.htm

29 PAssIFLorA oNLINE JourNAL SEPTEMBER 2011
Many countries have their own unique histories of Passiflora cultivation. In this article I will briefly describe the history of Passiflora cultivation in the Czech republic, from the early 1900s up to the present day.

Along with Pelargonium and Begonia species, Passiflora caerulea was a popular plant used for decorating Czech country house windows in the beginning of the last century. After the Second World War this tradition was lost.

From the communist coup d'état in February 1948 to the Velvet Revolution in 1989, Czechoslovakia was a member of the communist block and people tended to escape to their hobbies. Gardening was very popular among the people and encouraged by the government. Apart from growing traditional fruit trees, many enthusiasts built their own subtropical or tropical greenhouses.

Specialized subsocieties started to appear under the Czech Gardening Society, notably in citrus. Greenhouse citrus growers were very active with some collections of more than a hundred varieties. Many of them also grew P. edulis and some others called ‘vegetable Passiflora’, the ID of which is unclear. The Prague Citrus Subsociety had more then 400 members at one time. Societies, exhibitions and the support of the Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture, part of the Czech University of Agriculture, Prague, were all good sources of plant material.

Among enthusiasts that rediscovered the beauty of Passiflora was Leopold Ševčík. He was the most significant breeder and created 70 hybrids in the 1990s, all with female names. Some pictures of his hybrids together with a comprehensive record of their parentage are published in Gusta Rocheltová’s website, which is in Czech, German and English. At the present time Mrs. Rocheltova is no longer active. Her collection included about 20 different Passiflora.

The catalog included Passiflora alata, aurantia, xbelotii, caerulea, cincinnata, edulis, cirtina, incarnata, ligularis, platyloba, quadrangularis, racemosa, reflecta, subpelata, tubar, xviolacea and vitifolia.

Later more web sites of citrus and other exotic plants growers appeared. Several articles were published about passion flowers and both garden centres and online markets started to stock the plants. Amateur growers found forums useful to make contacts with other enthusiasts.

In 2004 Dagmar Horáková and Miroslav Hajdušík founded the Czech and Moravian Club of Passiflora Enthusiasts with 24 members from various parts of the Czech Republic. The following year the Club’s website was created with both public and private pages. Some members of the club have their own web sites which the Club site links to.

With the spreading of the Internet the first Czech website to offer a wider range of Passiflora was created by Ing. Jitka Koutenská:

As of today the site no longer exists.

Among the members of the club were Mr. and Mrs. Jarošovi who own a garden centre offering a wide range of Passiflora plants. In the catalog one can choose from 144 different passion flower plants.

Also some Czech dealers of exotic seeds offer seeds of several common types of passion flowers. Mauro Peixoto from Brazil is also popular among growers for supply of seeds.

Now, the phenomenon of Facebook in particular has had a positive effect in increasing contacts among growers – both in the Czech republic and around the world. Beside the Passiflora Online Group created by Myles Irvine, a Czech version was also created by one of the Club’s active members, Roman Vránek. It is my hope and expectation that these new developments will build on our long history of growing Passiflora in the Czech Republic and help us expand the number of species in cultivation.


Sites:
1. web.quick.cz/passiflora/
2. cmkpm.ic.cz/
4. www.brazilplants.com/
5. www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_5596648422
“Many thanks to Ethan Nielsen for his kindness in letting POJ continue to use his logos and format.”