Bignonia capreolata
(Anisostichus capreolata, Anisostichus crucigera, Doxantha capreolata)

Other Common Names: Crossvine, Quartervine, Trumpet Flower.
Family: Bignoniaceae.
Cold Hardiness: B. capreolata is cold hardy to USDA zones 6a (6b) through 9 (10).
Foliage: Cross Vine has opposite trifoliate leaves which appear as two outer leaflets with the center leaf replaced by a contorted long green branched tendril having tiny terminal cup-like disks similar to those seen on Parthenocissus spp. rather than nodal aerial rootlets as on C. radicans; leaflets are broadly lanceolate to narrowly ovate, (3”) 4” to 6” (7”) long by 1” to 2” wide, with cordate bases, long acuminate tips, and entire to slightly undulate margins; venation is pinnate, lightly impressed above, raised beneath, and curving forward near the edges, merging to form an outer rim of more or less continuous veins; new leaves may have a reddish flush as they emerge; the stoutish petiole and petiolules may initially be flushed red and be hairy, later maturing to a darker green and less noticeably pubescent; leaves often take on a reddish purple caste in winter.
Flower: Sometimes this species is confused in flower with C. radicans; flowers are borne in axillary clusters on mature plants; they are narrowly trumpet-shaped and 1 1/2” to 2 1/2” long; the corolla is five-lobed, and orange-red to purple-red on the exterior with a yellowish throat; the flowers are more or less two-lipped, with the upper lip composed of two somewhat smaller lobes and the lower three larger lobes; flowers occur at a peak in late winter to mid-spring, then tail off as the heat of summer approaches, occurring only sporadically throughout the remainder of the summer; flowering on some cultivars can be so prolific as to cover the canopy, while most of the wild types have sparser flowering.
Fruit: Flattened woody capsules mature in late summer to autumn changing from green to light brown to brown and drying; capsules are 4” to 6” long by about 1” wide and contain numerous flattened winged seeds typical of the family Bignoniaceae, but the capsules are not ornamental.
Stem / Bark: Stems — the twigs have a pith that produces an X or cross shape when cut in cross-section; shoots are sinuous, medium to dark green, and sometimes flushed a purplish red as they mature; short hairs are present to varying degrees initially, becoming less noticeable on older stems; Buds — nodes are widely spaced between long internodes; buds few scaled, small, mostly green, often elongating shortly after formation; Bark — older stems turning brown to gray-brown with age.
Habit: Cross Vine is a rapid growing semi-evergreen to evergreen woody vine that climbs by twining and adhesive tendrils, thus it can climb vertical walls to 50’ or so in height; growth rates are moderately fast and the overall texture is medium.
Cultural Requirements: This species is tolerant of a wide variety of soils from those that are seasonally wet to moderately droughty sites once established, however they do tolerate extended drought; plants are soil pH adaptable and very heat tolerant; plant in a sunny to partly sunny location; although a nice native vine requiring only moderate maintenance, sometimes established plants will succumb for no apparent reason.
Pathological Problems: Few insect or disease problems usually develop in the landscape, however mealy bug infestations are sometimes reported.
Ornamental Assets: Dark glossy green leaves are a general garden asset, but the primary attraction is the early off-season flowers which can be spectacular en masse, particularly with some of the new improved cultivars.
Limitations & Liabilities: Bignonia capreolata can become rampant once established and needs room to spread.
Landscape Utilization: Cross Vine can be used for naturalizing, as an informal bank cover, on trellises and arbors, and as a masonry wall cover if one is patient and plants can grasp an occasional perch; Bignonia capreolata is probably not as quick a study at climbing vertical walls as C. radicans; flowers of Cross Vine can be grown to attract hummingbirds and this is an excellent vine to hide chain link fences; avoid placing on trees due to its vigorous growth.
Other Comments: The genus Bignonia L honors the 18th century French librarian Abbé Jean Paul Bignon; the specific epithet refers to the twining nature of the tendrils; many taxa in related genera, including Campsis, were once included in a broader interpretation of the genus Bignonia.
Native Habitat: Native to the Southeastern USA, including East Texas.
Related Taxa: This is a plant that deserves to be more extensively planted; there are several improved cultivars.
emerging in the trade; one of the best is *B. capreolata* ‘Tangerine Beauty’ with masses of winter to spring tangerine colored flowers and an extended bloom time lasting much further into the summer than most genotypes.

**References:** Burras, 1994; Dirr, 2009; Grimm, 1993; Howard, 1959.

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