**Solandra maxima** (M. Sessé y Lacasta & J.M. Mociño) P.S. Green  
**Golden Chalice Vine**

(Datura maxima)

- Also known as Copa De Oro, Cup-Of-Gold, Pera Tetona, or Tetona, this Central and South American vine is a large evergreen woody climber to 40’ or more in USDA hardiness zones 10 (9b) to 13; it dies back to varying degrees in zone 9, but may return from the roots; a robust coarse textured vine *S. maxima* has large ovate to elliptic dark green leaves to 7” long subtended with long petioles up to 6” long, stout brown to gray brown stems, and the main attraction which is the 6” to 8” long goblet-shaped pale yellow to dull golden yellow flowers; flowers have five smooth edged petals that recurve at the lip of the spreading goblet-shaped corolla; a thin dark purple streak runs down the center of each petal in the throat of the flower; the tubular green calyx covers the lower half of the corolla; the scent of the flowers is likened to coconuts; the specific epithet means largest, probably in reference to the large flowers.

- Although *S. maxima* is easily grown on most soils with a sunny exposure and sufficient structure to support their weight, cold hardiness limits their use in all but the warmest portions of our region; this is particularly important as this taxon blooms only during the cool months, i.e. is a short day (long night) flowering species; thus flowers are frequently injured before they can be effective in areas with significant frosts; this vine is sometimes grown in high light interiorscapes when artificial lights can be restricted so flowering is not disrupted, however its growth tends to be overly vigorous for indoor use.

- *Solandra longiflora* F.R. de Tussac (*Swartsia longiflora*) is a very closely related vine to *S. maxima* originating from the Caribbean Islands; *Solandra longiflora* serves essentially identical purposes in the landscape and can be grown in similar climates as *S. maxima*; consequently both species share many vernacular names in common; *Solandra longiflora* is also known as Cáliz De Oro, Chalice Vine, Cup-Of-Gold, or Copa De Oro; *Solandra longiflora* differs from *S. maxima* in having a longer more drawn out flower, 10” to 12” long, with a constricted rim at the top of the throat, fringed margins on the recurved petals, young flowers tend to be even paler than those of *S. maxima*, and the leaves are slightly smaller, to 6” long, with a shorter petiole than those of *S. maxima*; the specific epithet refers to the narrowly elongated proximal portion of the corolla; while a tossup in the landscape, *S. longiflora* is a slightly smaller vine offering a bit larger flower with more elegant shape, but both taxa are very showy.

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