

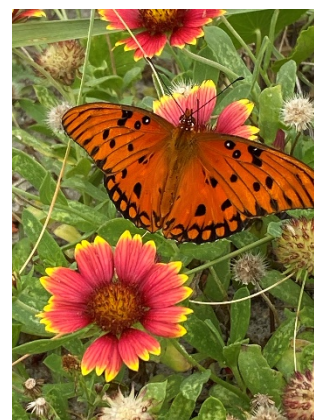
## Weed focus: Maypop

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Maypop (*Passiflora incarnata* L.), also known as passion flower, gets its name from the loud popping noise made by its fruits when they are stepped on in a field. Maypop is a warm-season, perennial native plant that grows in pastures, along roads, and in disturbed areas. It is a viny plant that can reach 6 to 8 feet in length and climb up fences, trees, or other plants. It is hardy and develops a taproot that eventually branches to send shoots up distant from the mother plant. It prefers sunny locations. While it can tolerate drought, it prefers moist but sandy soils.



Maypops are known for their showy purplish flowers (left). It is because of these flowers that this plant is sold as an ornamental for gardens. The plants do not need to climb in order to flower; however, they are less likely to spread to locations where they may become a pest if they are trellised. Blooms have 5 bifurcated petals that give the appearance of 10 petals. They have 5 stamens and fine structures between the petals and stamens making them very showy.



Maypops have alternate, 3-lobed leaves that extend from a stem that can be smooth or lightly pubescent. The leaves are the sole food source for the larvae of the Gulf Fritillary butterfly (top right), so they do have ecological value. From the human perspective, the plant has been used as a sleep-aid and to treat hypertension; however, there is concern that it could interfere with anticoagulant medications and monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOI). Check with your physician if you plan to try this remedy for insomnia. The roots were used by Native Americans in medicines to treat several maladies. Additionally, the fruits can be eaten or made into jelly. They are green and a bit smaller than a lime. They appear in the fall (bottom right). They are largely hollow. Maypops go dormant with a killing frost and return in spring.



Because of their viny nature, Maypops are classified as weeds in some places. They can become entangled in haying equipment if populations become too great. They can also choke out more desirable plants. There is no known toxicity to grazing animals and grazing may help keep small populations in check.

Controlling maypop in pastures: Chemical control of maypop is possible by applications of 2,4-D, triclopyr, picloram, and/or dicamba. Higher rates may be needed to control this viny perennial and it is difficult to completely eradicate. Check the label instructions. Glyphosate may be used to spot spray small infestations. Tillage is not recommended since it can spread the plant's seeds and therefore the infestation.

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