BignoniaceaeCTrumpetcreeper family

# *Campsis radicans* (L.) Seem. ex Bureau

## common trumpetcreeper

Franklin T. Bonner

Dr. Bonner retired from the USDA Forest Service=s Southern Research Station, Mississippi State, Mississippi.

**Synonyms.** *Bignonia radicans* L., *Tecoma radicans* (L.) Juss.

**Other common names.** trumpetvine, cowitch vine, trumpet-flower.

**Growth habit, occurrence, and uses.** Common trumpetcreeperC*Campsis radicans* (L.) Seem. ex BureauCa deciduous vine, is native from Texas to Florida and north to Missouri, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey (Vines 1960). It has also been introduced into New England (Bonner 1974). The vine is sometimes used in erosion control and as an ornamental, but its greatest value is for wildlife food.

**Flowering and fruiting.** The large, orange-to-scarlet, perfect flowers are 5 to 9 cm long and appear from May through September (Bonner 1974; Vines 1960). This species is largely self-sterile, but pollinates well when self and cross pollen are mixed (Bertin and Sullivan 1988). The fruit is a 2-celled, flattened capsule about 5 to 15 cm long (figure 1) that matures from September to November (Vines 1960). The capsules turn from green to gray brown as they mature, and the small, flat, winged seeds (figures 1 and 2) are dispersed chiefly by wind as the mature capsules split open on the vine from October through December (Bonner 1974; Vines 1960). Good seed crops are borne annually.

**Collection and extraction.** Ripe capsules should be gathered when they turn grayish brown in the fall before splitting open. Seeds can be extracted by hand-flailing. There are approximately 300,000 cleaned seeds/kg (136,000/lb) (Bertin 1990; Bonner 1974). One sample had a purity of 98%, with 52% sound seed (Bonner 1974). The longevity of common trumpetcreeper seeds in storage is not known, but if the seeds are dried to about 10% moisture content, they should store as well as other orthodox seeds.

**Germination and nursery practice.** The seeds exhibit some embryo dormancy. Pretreatment is not necessary for germination, but cold, moist stratification for 60 days at 5 to 10 ˚C is recommended for quick and uniform germination (Bonner 1974; Dirr and Heuser 1987). Germination tests in sand have been run for 30 days at 20 ˚C night and 30 ˚C day temperatures. Four tests with stratified seeds averaged 66% germination, and germination rate was 51% in 19 days (Vines 1960). Germination is epigeal (figure 3). Seedlings can be grown in nursery beds from either untreated seeds sown in the fall or from stratified seeds sown in the spring. Some horticultural cultivars are propagated by stem and root cuttings and layering. Softwood cuttings taken in June to September are easily rooted without hormone treatments (Dirr and Heuser 1987).

### Literature Cited

Bertin RI. 1990. Effects of pollination intensity in *Campsis radicans*. American Journal of Botany 77: 178B187.
Bertin RI, Sullivan M. 1988. Pollen interference and cryptic self-fertility in *Campsis radicans*. American Journal of Botany 75: 1140B1147.
Bonner FT. 1974. *Campsis radicans*, common trumpetcreeper. In: Schopmeyer CS, tech. coord. Seeds of woody plants of the United States. Agric. Handbk. 450. Washington, DC: USDA Forest Service: 260B261.
Dirr MA, Heuser CWJr. 1987. The reference manual of woody plant propagation: from seed to tissue culture. Athens, GA: Varsity Press. 239 p.
Vines RA. 1960. Trees, shrubs, and woody vines of the Southwest. Austin: University of Texas Press. 1104 p.