

## Fallopia baldschuanica - Growing Guide

### Growing Fallopia Baldschuanica

Russian vine, Mile-a-minute plant

This is a hardy, twining climber that will quickly develop a woody stem and rapidly get out of control. In older gardens it naturalises itself and will quickly cover anything in its path. It is therefore ideal for quickly covering a bare wall or fence or for growing up and through an elderly tree which is on its last legs. Once Fallopia has dominated its host it will carry on growing and trailing often then forming huge cascades of foliage and flower which hang down in great swathes. If you use it to cover a pergola it will need rigorous annual pruning to keep it in check but, in a wilder part of the garden, it certainly has its uses.

*F. baldschuanica* originates from Tajikistan, Afghanistan and W Pakistan. It has heart shaped green leaves which are up to 4in long. Although the climber is deciduous it is early into growth and late to shed its leaves. In late summer or early autumn the Russian vine produces copious panicles of tiny funnel shaped pink tinged white flowers towards the ends of its shoots. These are followed by small pink fruits. The reference books say that this plant can achieve 40ft in height but, in our high Cornish rainfall, this may well be a conservative estimate.

Russian vines will grow absolutely anywhere in the poorest soils with little fertility. If you really do want to propagate it, hardwood cuttings taken in the autumn and positioned in the cold frame are the best bet unless your plant is old enough to set seed. These can be sown as soon as they are ripe in the autumn or in the spring.

If one had to describe a 'garden thug' this would probably be it!

We also now sometimes have on offer. *F. baldschuanica* 'Summer Sunshine' which has red new shoots, yellow leaves and profuse white

flowers.



Fallopia baldschuanica



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Fallopia baldschuanica



Fallopia 'Summer  
Sunshine'



Fallopia 'Summer  
Sunshine'

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