

ONAGRACEAE

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A family of 22 genera and ~660 species of herbs or seldom shrubs, trees or scrambling vines. Although cosmopolitan in distribution, many genera are centered in temperate areas or in cool, high elevation areas of the Neotropics. Vines in the Neotropics belong exclusively to the genus *Fuchsia*, with a total of ~15 species of scrambling vines. These are for the most part centered in the Andean regions of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, and the coastal mountains of the states of Rio de Janeiro south to Parana in southeastern Brazil.

Diagnosics: Scrambling vines 2–6 m long, stems slender with shaggy bark, flowers pendent, often fuchsia, deep pink, red or orange, with inferior, often green ovary, forming a long hypanthium above the ovary, stamens exerted, of unequal lengths.

General Characters

1. STEMS. Cylindrical, with limited secondary growth (1–2 cm diam.), reaching 2–6 m in length; bark beige, commonly shaggy; cross section with regular anatomy forming a continuous vascular cylinder traversed by narrow rays.
2. EXUDATES. No visible exudate.
3. CLIMBING MECHANISM. Scrambler, with short plagiotropic branches or long hanging branches.
4. LEAVES. Alternate, opposite or whorled, simple, entire or serrate, pinnatinerved; stipules lanceolate, basal or interpetiolar, caducous.
5. INFLORESCENCES. Flowers axillary, solitary but often congested at the ends of branches, sometimes in pedant racemes or panicles.

6. FLOWERS. Flowers large, actinomorphic or zygomorphic, bisexual, solitary in leaf axils, or in axillary spikes, racemes or panicles; calyx forming a hypanthium with 4 sepals at apex; corolla of 4 distinct, clawed petals; stamens twice as many as the petals, or seldom 4 or 2, the filaments borne on the hypanthium or surrounding the nectary disk that encircles the apical portion of the ovary, the anthers opening by longitudinal slits; ovary inferior, of (2–) 4, united carpels, the placentation axile or parietal, the ovules 1–many per carpel, the style terminal with a capitate to 4-lobed stigma.
7. FRUITS. A fleshy berry, with many seeds.

FUCHSIA Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1191. 1753.

Erect shrubs, scrambling vines or lianas, or less commonly trees or herbaceous plants,



Fuchsia cf. *regia*, photo by P. Acevedo.

often with well-developed tubers. Lianas reaching 10–15 m in length, with long hanging branches. Stems flexible, terete, ridged in some species, commonly < 2 cm in diam.; bark light brown-beige, shaggy when old or smooth that splits off in a few long strips (Berry 1982); cross section with regular anatomy forming a continuous vascular cylinder traversed by narrow rays, medulla often becoming hollow. Leaves opposite, whorled or alternate, entire to serrulate, with small caducous stipules. Flowers axillary but often congested at the end of branches, pendent, actinomorphic; perianth commonly pink,

red, purple or orange but calyx coloration different from that of the corolla; calyx tubular

forming a hypanthium beyond the ovary, lobes 4, elongated and often slightly spreading; nectary often present at the base of the calyx tube; corolla of 4 free, overlapping petals; stamens 8, exerted, 4 antipetalous and shorter than the others; ovary inferior commonly green and distinct from the hypanthium, 4-carpellate, with numerous ovules per carpel, stigma capitate or clavate, entire or lobed. Fruit a fusiform, fleshy, many-seeded berry.

Distinctive features: Scrambling, unarmed vines, moderately woody, leaves alternate, opposite or whorled, flowers very showy and pendent, with long exerted stamens of two different lengths.

Distribution: A genus predominantly native to the highlands of Mexico, Central America, South America and Hispaniola, with 106 species in the Neotropics, 15 of which are reported as scrambling vines, these occurring in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and SE Brazil; moist, wet or cloud forests; 1,700–3,400 m.