Pesche's
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Mexican Honeysuckle

Justicia spicigera



Mexican Honeysuckle flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 6 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Orange Plume Flower, Firecracker Bush

Description:

This clump forming plant produces bright orange flowers all season; a large shrubby evergreen in frost free areas; dies back in colder areas but recovers quickly; prune back regularly to maintain bushiness

Ornamental Features

Mexican Honeysuckle features airy panicles of orange tubular flowers at the ends of the branches from early to late summer. Its attractive tomentose oval leaves remain green in color with curious grayish green undersides throughout the year.



Mexican Honeysuckle
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Mexican Honeysuckle is a multi-stemmed annual with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Mexican Honeysuckle is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Mexican Honeysuckle will grow to be about 5 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 6 feet. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Mexican Honeysuckle is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.