Mexican Honeysuckle

Justicia spicigera



Mexican Honeysuckle flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 6 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8

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. It has attractive green foliage with grayish green undersides. The fuzzy oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain green throughout the winter.



Mexican Honeysuckle
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Mexican Honeysuckle is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, 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;

- 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. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years.

This shrub 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 may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. 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 makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use 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 grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.