California Four O'Clock

Mirabilis laevis var. crassifolia



California Four O'Clock flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 24 inches

Spread: 4 feet

Spacing: 4 feet

Sunlight: ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Wishbone Bush, syn. Mirabilis californica

Description:

A native, perennial sub-shrub that is covered with bright pink to purple blooms from winter to early summer, when it may go dormant in dry conditions; attractive sea-green foliage makes a nice mound; great for groundcover, rock gardens or naturalizing

Ornamental Features

California Four O'Clock is blanketed in stunning clusters of purple cup-shaped flowers with pink overtones at the ends of the stems from early winter to late spring. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its small oval leaves remain bluish-green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

California Four O'Clock is an herbaceous annual with a mounded form. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spreading
- Self-Seeding

California Four O'Clock is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

California Four O'Clock will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 4 feet apart. 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. As this plant tends to go dormant in summer, it is best interplanted with late-season bloomers to hide the dying foliage.

This plant does best in a location that gets morning sunlight but is shaded from the hot afternoon sun, although it will also grow in partial shade. Keep it away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is native to parts of North America..

California Four O'Clock is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. It can be used either as 'filler' or as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, depending on the height and form of the other plants used in the container planting. 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.