

4 O' Clock

- Zone 4-9
- Sun Full Sun
- Plant Type Medium size
- Bloom Season Summer, Late Summer, Early Fall, Fall
- Plant Height 24"
- Ornamental Use Beds, Borders
- Planting Time Spring
- Features Attracts Bees and Butterfly's
- Life Cycle Perennial, Annual

Four o'clock flowers grow and bloom abundantly in the summer garden. Blooms open in the late afternoon and evening, hence the common name four o'clocks. Highly fragrant, in a range of colors, the four o'clock plant sports attractive flowers that attracts butterflies, bees and hummingbirds.

4 O' Clock Plant info

Four o'clock flowers, *Mirabilis jalapa*, were originally found in the Andes Mountains of South America. The *Mirabilis* part of the Latin name means "wonderful" and is an accurate description of the hardy four o'clock plant. Grow four o'clocks in poor to average soil for the most abundant production of four o'clock flowers. Many varieties of the flower exist, including some that are native to the United States. Native Americans grew the plant for

medicinal properties. *Mirabilis multiflora* is called the Colorado four o'clock.

By now you may wonder what four o'clock flowers look like. They are tubular shaped blooms in colors of white, pink, purple, red and yellow that grow on erect to trailing green stems. Different flower colors can appear on a single stem, in some varieties. Bi-color flowers are common, such as a white flower with red markings on the throat.

Sowing and growing instructions

Dig a good shovelful of fine, rich compost about a foot deep below surface level to accommodate four o'clock's long taproot, and be ready to keep the area consistently moist during and beyond germination.

Seed Treatment: *Mirabilis* seeds can remain dormant for years. When growing four o'clock from seed, we recommend either (or both) a good overnight soak in lukewarm water, or mechanical stratification by scoring or lightly sanding the seeds to assist in germination.

When to Plant Outdoors: Direct sow seeds after all danger of frost has passed.

When and How to Plant Indoors: Sow your four o'clock seeds indoors 6-8 weeks prior to your last frost. Protect the growing taproot by planting in peat pots and consider growing and watering them in capillary trays to encourage root growth from the bottom. If you don't have overhead fluorescent lights and sub-tray heat mats, germinate your seeds in a warm, sunny window.

Seed Depth: Plant 1/4" deep. *M. jalapa* seeds are larger than most that require sunlight, so they shouldn't be surface sown.

Seed Spacing: Plant or thin 12" to 18" apart.

Days to Germination: 7-14 days at 70°F.

Transplanting Tips: Soak and score your peat pots and plant them in loose, damp-to-wet garden soil. Take care not to damage the growing taproot.