

your garden needs...



...Mimulus

Species: *Mimulus hybrida*
Family: Scrophulariaceae
Common name: Monkey flower
Height: 20cm (8 inches)
Grow as: annual
Flowering period: May to August

Mimulus (Monkey flower) is a species gaining in popularity. It has brightly coloured flowers in shades of red, orange and yellow borne on a compact plant, for container and bedding display. Best for the spring and early summer.

Use packetseeds.com variety **Matador**. Large flowers in clear colours and blotch, a high performing attractive mixture. Each 95p packet contains approximately 400 seeds.

In its native Chile it is a perennial and in central Europe will live a number of years in a sheltered position; however, it is usually treated as an annual because it flowers best the first year. The leaves are egg-shaped, shallowly toothed and coloured bright green. The symmetrical, large, trumpet-shaped flowers measure up to 5cm (2 inches) across and are borne on stalks in the axils of the leaves. The corolla has five sections. Many blooms are borne in succession throughout the summer, beginning in May.

Mimulus is the ideal bedding plant for shady, damp conditions. Resistant to slight frost it can be used from late April / early May. Mimulus does best in moist, sandy loam rich in humus. It does not do well in a situation that is excessively wet or too dry. Unlike most annuals it grows well even in semi-shade.

The compact and spreading habit of Mimulus is also perfectly suited to use in colour bowls and hanging baskets, either on its own or mixed in with other items. Sensitive to day length, Mimulus responds well to extended days.

It is most effective planted separately and in a position where its unusual flowers can be seen to good advantage.

Sowing: Sow the seed onto a pre-soaked disease free compost. Cover lightly and germinate at 15-18°C (60-65°F). Seeds are very tiny and should not be covered with soil but merely pressed in. Emergence should start in two or three days, and the first true



leaves will appear in a further two or three days. High humidity will help speedy and uniform germination; it is sensible to cover the seed tray with a thin clear plastic sheet until the radicles emerge.

Once the true leaves are beginning to unfurl, then the temperature can be lowered to 10-12°C (50-55°F), and the trays removed to full light. Prick out when large enough, seedlings are small so handle with care. Some shading will be necessary on very bright days. Ensure that the young plants never dry out, and apply a liquid feed if necessary.

Mimulus grows best in low temperatures, excessive heat causing long, etiolated growth. Avoid temperatures above 15°C (60°F).

Grow the plants in a cool glasshouse at a night temperature of 5-8°C (40-45°F). Daytime temperatures should be kept as close to the night temperatures as possible, but can be allowed to rise to between 12 and 15°C (55-60°F).