

Magic Mimulus

This compact and early flowering mimulus is very uniform across the series.

By Catherine Evans



Left: 'Magic White Flame'; Middle: 'Magic Blotch Mix'; Right: 'Magic Yellow Flame'.

Mimulus — not a crop you hear much about but should. The Magic series from Floranova grows approximately 10 inches high with flowers that are 1½-2 inches in diameter. Magic has a very short production time under long days, with flowering 6-7 weeks after sowing. The plants are frost resistant and can flower again in the spring. Flowering time is spring to late summer. Magic should be sown in late winter to spring under glass. 'Magic Blotch Mix' has been added to the series this year for a total of 18 color choices. Other colors in the Magic series are White Flame, Yellow Blotch, Yellow Flame, Crimson, Ivory, Ivory Bicolour, Orange, Red, Wine, Yellow, Yellow Bicolour, Pastel Pink Shades, Pastel Yellow Improved, Peach, Pastel Mixed, White with Blotch and Mixed. Below are some culture tips suggested by Floranova.

SOWING AND GERMINATION

Sow the seed onto a pre-soaked, disease-free media with a pH of 5.5-5.8. Cover lightly and germinate at 60-65° F soil temperature. Emergence should start in two or three days, and the first true leaves will appear in another two or three days. High humidity will help speedy and uniform germination, so a fogging system is recommended. Should no fog be available then it is wise to cover the seed with a thin clear plastic sheet until the radicles emerge.

Once the true leaves are beginning to

unfurl, soil temperature can be lowered to 50-55° F and the trays removed to full light. Some shading will be necessary on very bright days. Ensure the young plants never dry out, and apply a liquid feed high in potassium if necessary (100-150 ppm), which will help produce a compact sturdy plant.

GROWING ON

Mimulus grows best in low temperatures; excessive heat causes long, leggy growth. This can be prevented by a single, low-dose application of plant growth regulator at about the four-leaf stage, also by the avoidance of temperatures above 60° F.

Plugs can be transplanted directly into the finish container, which is likely to be a cell pack. Each cell should be about 2½ inches across.

Place the packs in a cool greenhouse, and maintain a night temperature of 40-45° F.

Daytime temperatures should be kept as close to the night temperatures as possible but can be allowed to rise to between 55 and 60° F.

Supplementary fertilizer may be needed, and light applications of a high-potassium fertilizer can be applied together with irrigation. Never allow plants to dry out.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Pests and diseases are not usually a problem. However, aphids and whiteflies can attack the crop, so it should be inspected regularly. Likewise, Botrytis is likely to infect any crop that is grown at too high temperatures, so care must be taken to prevent such conditions. GPN

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Why Magic?

Plain and simple: This crop is underused. Mimulus has a unique look, especially within the blotch varieties. And, this variety is one to choose because of its timing and habit. Magic has a short production time under long days — flowering in late spring to late summer, 6-7 weeks after sowing. I know you are drained by this time, but it makes for a good after-spring sale. Beware, this crop loves it cool, so make sure to consider your spring lineup and cooling methods. Even after considering all of this information, the fact that it is also called monkey flower makes it just downright interesting — think of the marketing possibilities! — **Carrie Burns**

