

Mexican Sunflowers for Late Season Color

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Mexican Sunflowers, which many consider a "friendly non-native" in the garden, are native to Mexico and Central America. Close enough if you like to attract pollinators and hummingbirds to your flower beds during the heat of summer and through the hummingbirds' fall migration.

Mexican Sunflowers (*Tithonia rotundifolia*) are part of the Daisy family. They prefer full sun in a well-drained garden spot and will tolerate poor soil. Sow seeds 1/4" deep after the last frost when the soil warms up. Seeds may be sown from May through July unless sown earlier indoors. Once the plant is established, Mexican Sunflowers will bloom in clusters until the first hard frost. Cultivars are available, including "Torch," the most common *Tithonia* sold, which grows to six feet tall with red-orange flowers. "Yellow Torch" has yellow flowers. "Fiesta del Sol" grows to three feet tall and features red-orange flowers. "Goldfinger," another shorter cultivar, has yellow-orange flowers.

A fast-growing annual that grows quickly in the summer heat, Mexican Sunflowers are considered drought-hardy and deer-tolerant. Once in bloom, nearly iridescent ray flowers will attract a host of pollinators, including Monarch and Swallowtail butterflies, many native bees, and hummingbirds, for a lively spot in the garden or backyard.



References

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/tithonia-rotundifolia/>

<https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/good-growing/2023-09-08-brighten-your-fall-landscape-tithonia>