



Four O'Clock (*Mirabilis multiflora*)

Four O'Clock is otherwise known as Colorado or Desert Four O'Clock. It derives from the four o'clock plant family, and family members typically grow in tropical and subtropical conditions. However, four o'clock thrives in the southwestern deserts of southwestern Colorado, Utah and parts of Mexico.

Description: Four o'clock wildflowers grow up to 2 feet tall and 6 feet wide. Six to eight petals grow from each flower. Flowers are brilliant purple-pink colorations and grow in a tubular formation. Four o'clock is a perennial plant and blooms between April and September, particularly after rainfall. Flowers are fragrant and attract a variety of wildlife.



Uses: Four o'clock was used as a food source for thousands of years. The plant is used to prepare tea drinks. Brown-purple dyes for wool are extracted from the radiant color of the four o'clock flower. Its heavy root was used in bird traps along and as an antiseptic for wounds on livestock. The multidimensional root was also placed in bread dough to suppress food cravings.

Location: Native to southwestern Colorado, Utah and Mexico, Four o'clock grows abundantly on sandy hills and mesas. Soil moisture must be dry and also may be part shady. Four o'clock is found in juniper and pinyon populations at about 2,500 to 7,500 feet. This wildflower is drought tolerant and does well in partial shade environments.

Sources:

"Mirabilia multiflora." *University of Texas at Austin, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.* 11 Feb. 2019. https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=mimu

"Four O'Clock." *Southwest Colorado Wildflowers.* 11 Feb. 2019. <https://www.swcoloradowildflowers.com/Pink%20Enlarged%20Photo%20Pages/mirabilis.htm>

"Four O'Clock (*Mirabilis multiflora*)." *United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.* 11 Feb. 2019. https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/mirabilis_multiflora.shtml

"Colorado Four O'Clock, *Mirabilis multiflora*." *California Native Plant Society, Calscape.* 11 Feb. 2019. [https://calscape.org/Mirabilis-multiflora-\(Colorado-Four-O'Clock\)?srchcr=sc5a8bb6b6cdba1](https://calscape.org/Mirabilis-multiflora-(Colorado-Four-O'Clock)?srchcr=sc5a8bb6b6cdba1)