

# Tithonia rotundifolia (Mexican Sunflower)

Mexican Sunflower is a low-maintenance annual that tolerates deer, drought, heat, and dry soil and has moderate salt tolerance. Showy in the garden, it is also a good cut flower.

It is fast-growing (3- to 6-ft. tall and 2- to 3-ft. wide) with plenty of orange-red 3-in. blooms that attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds from mid-summer to fall.

Plant *Tithonia rotundifolia* in full sun in average, well-drained soils. Avoid rich soil or heavy fertilization, both of which promote excess foliage and weak stems. Pinch back plants to encourage sturdier, bushier growth. Sturdier plants are less likely to fall over but plants may need to be staked. Stems can be brittle, so shelter plants from strong winds if possible. Dead-head to prolong the bloom season.



Flower Close-up (Johnston, NC)  
Chris Alberti  
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Use this plant in the back of the border in cutting gardens, drought-tolerant gardens and pollinator gardens. For a high-energy planting, use in mixed or annual borders with

tall zinnias, coreopsis, and other flowers in hot colors. Or tone down the brilliant orange-red flowers by combining with purple flowers and larger plants with dark-colored foliage.

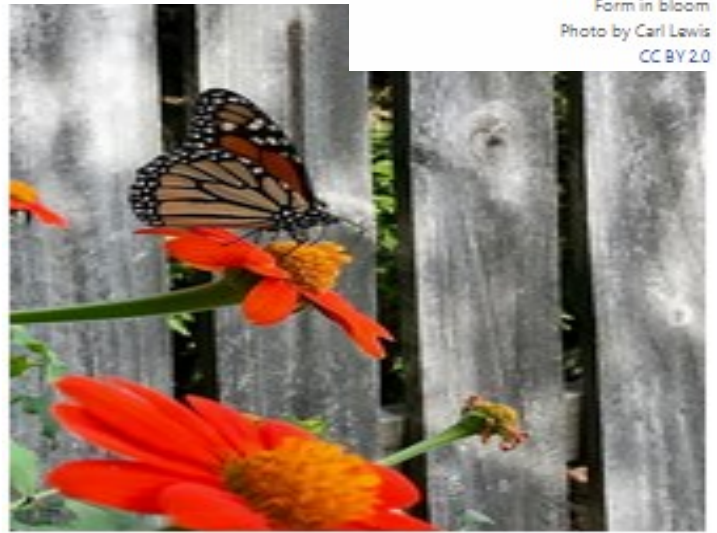
Mexican Sunflower has no serious insect or disease problems, but watch for slugs and snails.

Only a few cultivars are generally available:

- ‘Torch’ – the most commonly offered cultivar, winner of an All-American Selection award in 1951.
- ‘Fiesta del Sol’ – a shorter cultivar, growing about 3-ft. tall.
- ‘Goldfinger’ – 2- to 2 ½ -ft. tall with orange-gold flowers.
- ‘Yellow Torch’ – with apricot yellow-orange flowers.



Form in bloom  
Photo by Carl Lewis  
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Flower with Monarch butterfly in the summer in Moore County  
Carol Bowman  
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The flowers are followed by grey to black, flattened triangular seeds that are easy to collect for future planting. Sow seeds directly in the garden at last frost date or, for earlier bloom, start them indoors 6 to 8 weeks before the last frost date. Thin plants to at least 2-ft. apart.

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For more information on gardening in Brunswick County, please call the Brunswick County Cooperative Extension Office, 910.253.2610.

## SOURCES:

[Tithonia rotundifolia \(Mexican Sunflower\) | North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox \(ncsu.edu\)](https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/growing-annuals/)

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/growing-annuals/>

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/mexican-sunflower-tithonia-rotundifolia/>