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Thursday, May 1, 2025



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How to Grow Moss Roses: The Complete Moss Rose Guide



Photo Credit: Svetlana CA Countryside

Botanical Name:
Portulaca grandiflora

Plant Type:
[Flower](#)

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Planting, Growing, and Caring for Moss Roses

By [Jennifer Keating](#)
Last Updated: July 9, 2024



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Bring vibrant color to your garden with the Moss Rose! This low-maintenance annual thrives in the hot sun and boasts cheerful blooms in a rainbow of hues. Learn how to grow Moss Rose from seeds or cuttings, and discover easy tips for watering, fertilizing, and keeping your plants blooming all summer!

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About Moss Roses

The Moss rose is easy to love. Native to the arid plains of Argentina, southern Brazil, and Uruguay, this semi-succulent in the purslane family (Portulacaceae) thrives in Zones 2 to 11 in this hemisphere. Its single, semidouble, and double rose-like flowers, in a wide range of hues that include white as well as cheerful pastels—fuchsia, lavender, magenta, orange, peach,

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ing baskets or filling containers. This low grower typically spreads a foot or more while it blooms, ranging from 1 to 3 inches in diameter, and rises up over the foliage.

Portulaca grandiflora demands little in terms of care but spreads joy and delight wherever it grows—as long as the Sun shines.

“The saucer-shaped, rose-like flowers are produced on the stem tips, held facing up above the foliage, opening from buds that resemble little popcorn kernels. They are only open in bright sunlight, closing at night and on cloudy days, but most of the newer hybrids will remain open throughout the day,” explains [Susan Mahr of the University of Wisconsin–Madison](#).

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Moss rose, aka Sun plant or Sun rose, is considered an herbaceous perennial in Zones 9 to 11 and treated as a tender annual elsewhere.



Read Next

- [How to Grow Million Bells: Your Guide to Trailing Petunias](#)
- [The Ultimate Guide to Growing The African Daisy](#)
- [How to Grow Rose of Sharon](#)

PLANTING

Purchasing seedlings or starter plants may jump-start moss roses' flowering period, but they can also be grown from seeds or propagated through cuttings from established plants.

Starting Moss Rose From Seeds

Start seeds in seed-starting mix indoors 6 to 8 weeks before the last frost. Cover minimally; moss roses need sunlight to germinate. [Learn to make your own seed-starting mix.](#)

Dampen and maintain moisture. Plants germinate in about 10 to 14 days in 70° to 85°F temperatures.

Propagating Moss Rose

To propagate from a cutting, prepare damp potting mix. Trim off a 3-inch piece of the plant and remove any foliage from the last inch of the cut end. Insert the cut end into the potting mix. Maintain even moisture until new growth appears,

Transplanting Moss Roses

Be aware that moss rose transplants need special care: The night before transplant-

(depending on plant size), including the soil surrounding the plant.

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Space plants 6 to 12 inches apart; crowded plants flower poorly. Replant, with roots only just below the soil's surface, as soon as possible.

Water lightly and keep moist until new growth appears (a sign that the plant is established). Moss rose's shallow root system means that water is important until plants get going. Afterward, too much water can cause rot, which is why well-draining soil is essential.

Moss rose is drought-tolerant but benefits from watering when the top inch of soil is dry. [See more drought-tolerant flowers.](#)

Provide 6 to 8 or more hours of sunlight per day; warm temperatures are ideal. Shade may reduce blooms.

Deadhead to stimulate more blooms or to deter self-seeding, if desired. If plants become leggy, pinch stems back and provide a diluted dose of balanced fertilizer. New growth and blooms should follow.



Yellow moss-rose purslane
(*Portulaca grandiflora*)

Types

- *Portulaca grandiflora* 'Afternoon Delight' 2-inch flowers in numerous

- *P. grandiflora* 'Calypso Mix': not as fast-growing as others; requires consistently moist soil; orange, pink, red, and yellow flowers
- *P. grandiflora* Happy Hour series: bred to bloom earlier in season; large, double blooms in vivid colors attract butterflies and hummingbirds
- *P. grandiflora* Sundance series: semi-double flowers in a multitude of colors remain open most of the day
- *P. grandiflora* Sundial series: early-flowering variety; double flowers in numerous colors open in cooler and cloudy weather

GARDENING PRODUCTS



PESTS/DISEASES

Diseases: none serious; sometimes

Botrytis blight, damping off, Pythium root and stem rot, Rhizoctonia root and stem rot.

Pests: [aphids](#), [slugs/snails](#).

WIT AND WISDOM

- Portulaca oleracea, common purslane with flat, fleshy leaves that is sometimes grown as a vegetable and often considered a weed, is known as “moss rose.” [You can eat purslane!](#)
[Learn more.](#)
- Portulacas have been grown in American gardens since the 1700s.
- “Portulaca” comes from the Latin words porto, meaning “to carry,” and lac meaning “milk,” referring to the milky sap of some species.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jennifer Keating



Jennifer is the Digital Editor at The Old Farmer's Almanac. She is an active equestrian and spends much of her free time at the barn. When she's not riding, she loves caring for her collection of house plants, baking, and playing in her gardens. [Read More from Jennifer Keating](#)

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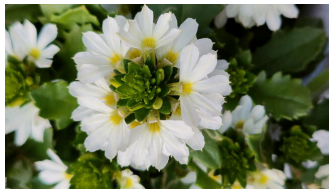
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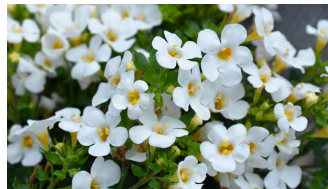
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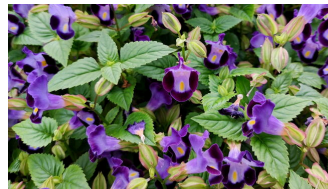
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They self seed in pots readily. I never have to plant new ones in the spring in the pots I had them in the year before. Can not get cheaper beautiful flowers easier than that!

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Cindy J. (not verified) 9 months 2 weeks ago
Portulaca are an annual here in New York, but they would spread from last years seeds. I love them!

[REPLY](#)

ACE (not verified) 9 months 2 weeks ago
I first bought a packet of Portulaca seeds at my local 5 and 10 when I was 12. I fell in love with them and 6 decades later, still grow them. My FAVE? The pink one with red stripes.
I used to cross breed them, and get singles, doublesand some pinks

[REPLY](#)

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