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How to Grow Wishbone Flowers: The Complete Wishbone Flower Guide



Botanical Name: *Torenia fourniana*

FREE GUIDE!

Photo Credit: Lin Mei Chin

Plant Type:

Sun Exposure: Part Sun, Shade

Soil pH: Slightly Acidic to Neutral

Flower Color: Blue, Purple, Red, Yellow

Planting, Growing, and Caring for Wishbone Flowers

By [Carol Connare](#)

Last Updated: November 20, 2024



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Bring vibrant color and a touch of whimsy to your garden with the Wishbone Flower! This easy-care annual thrives in shade or partial shade, boasting unique trumpet-shaped blooms and colorful foliage. Learn how to grow Wishbone Flowers from seeds or transplants, and discover their surprising namesake feature!

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About the Wishbone Flower

No bones about it: This plant makes wishes come true. Look closely at the

trumpet-shaped flowers for the plant's eponymous feature: A pair of stamens unite at the anthers in a way that resembles a wishbone, a part found in chickens, turkeys, and other birds.

Also known as bluewings, *Torenia fournieri* is a perennial grown as an annual.

“Torenia’s hail from tropical portions of Asia and Africa and are named after Olof Toren (1718–53), who traveled in China as a chaplain for the Swedish East India Company in the middle of the 18th century,” explains [Gerald Klingaman, an Extension Horticulturist at the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.](#)

Wishbone flower grows well in [shade or semi-shade](#) (even indoors) if adequate moisture is maintained; legginess is a clue that more light is needed. Note that most cultivars are intolerant of sun and high heat. (The greater the amount of light that a wishbone flower

can receive and tolerate, the wider the choices available as companion plants in containers; growth habits should be compatible.)

Wishbone flower's color appears not only in its blooms— its foliage can turn red or bronze in unseasonably cold weather.



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- [How to Grow Moss Roses: The Complete Moss Rose Guide](#)
- [How to Grow Bacopa: The Complete Bacopa Flower Guide](#)
- [Scaevola Success: Complete Guide to Growing Fan Flowers](#)

PLANTING

Purchasing wishbone flowers or starting its seeds indoors 8 to 12 weeks before the last spring frost in a 70° to 75°F environment are options. For the latter, do not cover: Light aids germination, which can take 7 to 15 days.

Plant 1 to 2 weeks after the last spring frost date. Provide a well-draining medium; use a potting mix amended with organic matter (compost and/or aged manure). [See our guide to using manure in the garden.](#)

GROWING

Place the wishbone flower where it will be in partial to full shade.

Water for consistent moisture, not saturation. Apply a balanced fertilizer every 2 weeks during the growing season.

[Deadheading](#) is not necessary; plants are self-cleaning.

Failure to bloom usually indicates too much shade and a need for sunlight. If trailing, avoid pinching, as this promotes bushy growth.

Types

- ‘Moon’ series (*T. fournieri*): purple and yellow shades
- ‘Panda’ series(*T. fournieri*): wide range of colorful flower hues; compact, at 4 to 8 inches tall
- ‘Summer Wave’ series (*T. fournieri*): tolerant of heat and drought; blue, rose, silver, and violet shades

GARDENING PRODUCTS





PESTS/DISEASES

Diseases: powdery mildew, Pythium root and stem rot, viruses.

Pests: aphids, whiteflies.

WIT AND WISDOM

- The tradition of treasuring the *furcula* (“little fork” in Latin)—the forked bone found at the front of most birds’ breasts—dates from the Etruscans, an ancient Italian civilization. They believed poultry to be oracles and this bone the key to a bird’s prescience. After a bird died, they would dry the bone in the sun; later it could be picked up and rubbed by those who passed by in order to have wishes granted—hence, “wishbone.” You can also predict the weather with a wish-

bone!

FLOWERS

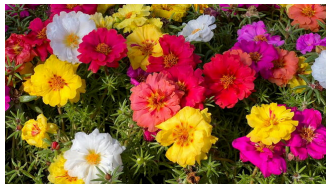
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Carol Connare

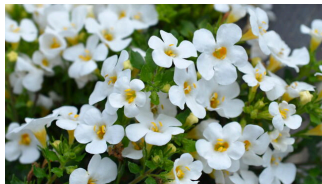


As the 14th Editor-in-Chief of The Old Farmer's Almanac, Carol Connare works with writers and other editors to develop “new, useful, and entertaining matter” for the annual Almanac as well as books, calendars, and other publications. [Read More from Carol Connare](#)

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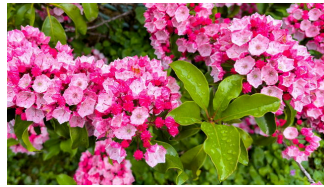
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Jeanette Copeland (not verified) 7

months 3 weeks ago

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grown as annuals, they are hardy
in Zones 10 and 11.

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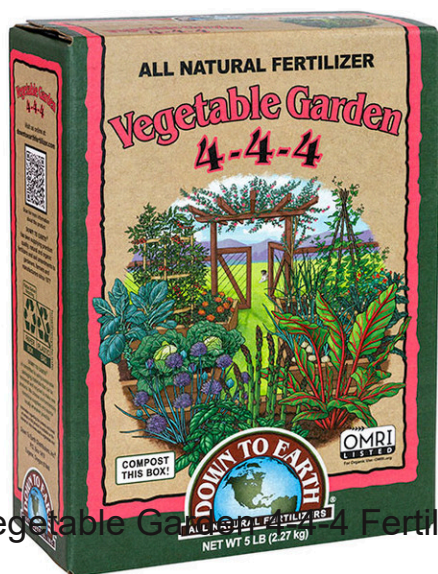
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