Torenia fournieri

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Introduction

Wishbone Flower is a perennial grown as an annual with flowers of blue, white, or pink with yellow markings (Fig. 1). The plants grow 12 to 15 inches tall and are spaced eight to nine inches apart. Torenia is an excellent landscape annual that may also be used as a potted plant. The leaves turn reddish green during unseasonably cold weather.

General Information

Scientific name: Torenia fournieri
Pronunciation: toe-REEN-nee-uh for-NEER-eye
Common name(s): Wishbone Flower, Torenia
Family: Scrophulariaceae
Plant type: annual
USDA hardiness zones: all zones (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 7: Jun
Planting month for zone 8: May; Jun
Planting month for zone 9: Apr; May; Jun; Sep; Oct
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: Mar; Apr; May; Sep; Oct
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: container or above-ground planter; edging; border
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: .5 to 1.5 feet
Spread: 1 to 1.5 feet
Plant habit: spreading
Plant density: dense

Growth rate: moderate
Texture: fine
Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate

Figure 1. Wishbone Flower.
Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf shape: ovate  
Leaf venation: bowed  
Leaf type and persistence: not applicable  
Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches  
Leaf color: green  
Fall color: not applicable  
Fall characteristic: not applicable  

Flower  
Flower color: pink; blue; white  
Flower characteristic: showy  

Fruit  
Fruit shape: no fruit  
Fruit length: no fruit  
Fruit cover: no fruit  
Fruit color: not applicable  
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy  

Trunk and Branches  
Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable  
Current year stem/twig color: green  

Current year stem/twig thickness: medium  

Culture  
Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade  
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; loam  
Drought tolerance:  
Soil salt tolerances: unknown  
Plant spacing: 12 to 18 inches  

Other  
Roots: not applicable  
Winter interest: not applicable  
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding  
Invasive potential: may self-seed each year  
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests  

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Use and Management

The plant grows well in shade or semi-shade, but produces the most flowers in full sun with adequate irrigation. Leggy plants indicate that the plants need more light. Provide a moist soil with a good supply of organic matter. The plant likes moisture and should not be allowed to dry out.

The seed germinates in two to three weeks at 70-degrees F. Fall planted seed provides plants for winter blooms indoors. Planting can be done from February through October in south Florida.

Cultivars have been developed within at least two series including the ‘Clown’ and ‘Panda’ series.

Pests and Diseases

Torenia had moderate to severe whitefly infestations in central Florida evaluation trials.