

TRY THE "SUMMER SNAPDRAGON" FOR GREAT SUMMER COLOR

By Ralph E. Mitchell, *Director/Horticulture Agent of Charlotte County Extension Service*

The "summer snapdragon", better known as Angelonia, is a great summer flower that grows from one to three feet tall and produces almost one-inch wide white, blue and white, and pink flowers arranged on narrow, eight-inch spikes. While true snapdragons grow best in our cooler winter weather, Angelonia is a real warm-weather, drought-tolerant plant that does well in the landscape, in containers, and can even be used as a cut flower. Angelonia are especially nice when used on the edge of a border. Available in many garden centers, Angelonia is a good bedding plant to try this year.

Native to Mexico and the West Indies, Angelonia is a member of the figwort family. The foliage of the Angelonia is glossy green to a grey-green color covered in minute hairs. While grown as an annual, this plant can sometimes winter over as a perennial in our hardiness zone. Plant Angelonia in a full sun, well-drained, moderate to dry location. Place plants from 12-16 inches apart in beds and fertilize with a balanced slow-release fertilizer suitable for flowering annuals. Expect at least six weeks of bloom in a typical season. One method to extend the bloom and rejuvenate plant vigor is to actually shear plants back 50% at mid-season which will initiate a re-bloom in about two to three weeks.

There are a number of non-patented Angelonia cultivars including 'Alba' with white flowers, 'Blue Pacifica' with white and blue

toned flowers, and 'Pandiana' which is pink with silver leaves. There are also a number of patented, yes, patented Angelonia available often offering larger plants, different colors and more vigorous growth. For instance, the patented Ball 'AngelMist' series comes in six colors from deep plum to lavender. Keep in mind that patented plants cannot be propagated commercially without a license from the patent holder.

One interesting final note on Angelonia is their smell. When crushed, the leaves smell to some people just like grape soda or apples!



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Here, Angelmist® is employed to create a rugged and colorful sunshiny bed that can take the heat.

For more information on all types of flowering plants for your garden suitable for our area, please contact our Master Gardeners on the Plant Lifeline at 941.764.4340 from 1:00pm-4:00pm Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Our office is located at 25550 Harbor View Road, Suite 3, in Port Charlotte. Our **Plant Clinics** are available across the county:

- **Demonstration Garden (6900 Florida Street, PG)** Thursdays 9:00am-11:00am.
- **Englewood/Charlotte Public Library** Thursdays 10:00am-1:00pm.
- **Mid-County Regional Library** 1st and 3rd Thursday of month 1:00pm-3:00pm.
- **Edison College Learning Resources Library** 3rd Tuesday of month 1:00pm-4:00pm.
- **South Gulf Cove Learning Garden** 3rd Wednesday of month 9:00am-12:00pm.

Monthly **Plant Clinics** are Saturdays 9:00am-12:00pm at the following locations:

- **Peachland Promenades Publix** 2nd Saturday of month.
- **Home Depot Murdock & Home Depot Punta Gorda** 3rd Saturday of month.
- **Lowe's Garden Center Murdock** 4th Saturday of month.

Ralph Mitchell is the County Extension Director/Horticulture Agent for the Charlotte County Cooperative Extension Service. You may contact him by email (Ralph.Mitchell@charlottefl.com). You may also contact a volunteer Master Gardener 1:00pm-4:00pm Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 941.764.4340 or by email (Master.Gardener@charlottefl.com).

For more information about our Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program, please contact our FYN Horticulture Program Assistant, Allison Steele, at 941.764.4340. Allison can help educate you about the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Program so that you can create a beautiful, Florida-Friendly landscape that saves you time and money while conserving precious water resources and reducing pollution.

Resource:

Schoelhorn, R. & Alvarez, E. (2002) Warm Climate Production Guidelines for Angelonia. UF/IFAS Extension.

Christman, S. (2003) Angelonia angustifolia. Floridata. www.floridata.com.