

## NOSE OF THE DRAGON

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The Latin name of the snapdragon translates more or less as “like a nose” referring to its tube-like flowers that open when squeezed reminding some of a dragon opening its mouth. These cool season annuals have come a long way from their native southern Mediterranean origins. Cold-tolerant and best grown in our area in fall and winter, this colorful flower does well as a bedding plant, in planters or a cut flower subject. Available in many heights and colors, these dragon nose's love our winter weather.

Although garden centers and nurseries presently have a large supply of snapdragons ready-to-plant in your garden, they can be started from seed or even by cuttings. Snapdragons do best in slightly acid soil in a full sun site. Amending the soil with organic matter will help keep the soil moist, but well-drained, as preferred by these plants. Water frequently until the plants are established and then as needed. Set individual plants about 14 inches apart and place them in the soil at the same depth they were in the pot as stem rots can develop if planted too deeply. Pinching of young plants will force branching and subsequently more flowers. Tall types of snapdragons may need to be staked to help support the blooms. As a bonus, once the old flower heads fade, cut them back so that only six nodes (a point where a leaf attaches) remain and your snapdragons will experience a second bloom. Fertilize at this point to promote this second blooming period.

Snapdragons can be divided up into tall types which grow to about two to three feet tall, intermediate sizes from one to two feet tall, bedding types that fit into the six to 15-inch range and rock garden varieties that grow only about six inches tall. The tall types include cultivars such as 'Rocket',

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'Burpee's Topper', 'Spring Giant', 'Bright Butterflies', and 'Panorama'. These snapdragons not only look good in the garden, but also make great cut flowers in bouquets. For intermediate snapdragons, you might find 'Liberty', 'Monarch', 'Pixie', 'White Wonder', 'Black Prince' and 'Vanity Fair'. You may also be able find some of the popular dwarf cultivars such as 'Tahiti', 'Tom Thumb', 'Floral Carpet', 'Magic Carpet', 'Little Gem' and a bi-colored variety called 'Peaches and Cream'. As a general rule-of-thumb, snapdragons with dark colored flowers have dark green or reddish stems and those with white or pale flowers have pale green stems.

Snapdragons do fine by themselves, but also make great companions for plants such as pansies. Add some of these colorful and winter-hardy flowers in your landscape beds today!

*Resources:*

- Gilman, E.F. (2007) *Antirrhinum majus* Snapdragon. UF/IFAS Extension Service.
- Gilman, E.F. (2007) *Antirrhinum majus* 'Tahiti', Tahiti Snapdragon. UF/IFAS Extension Service.
- Gilman, E.F. (2007) *Antirrhinum majus* 'Liberty', Liberty Snapdragon. UF/IFAS Extension Service.
- Christman, S. (2004) *Antirrhinum majus*. Floridata.com
- Klingaman, G. (2004) *Plant of the Week: Snapdragon*. The University of Arkansas.
- Winter, N. (2002) *Southern Gardening - Snapdragons Make Ideal Fall Plantings*. Mississippi State University.

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*For more information about our Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program, please contact our FYN Horticulture Program Assistant, Allison Turner, at 764.4351 or email [Allison.Turner@CharlotteFL.com](mailto:Allison.Turner@CharlotteFL.com). Allison can help educate you about the FYN Program so you can create a beautiful, Florida-Friendly landscape that saves you time and money while conserving precious water resources and reducing pollution.*

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