

## A FOCUS ON GOLDEN DEWDROPS

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In a past article I had mentioned the attributes of the shrub known as the Golden Dewdrop or *Duranta* concerning the various variegated forms. In this article, I want to build further on this versatile woody plant as an attractive and colorful addition to your landscape. Now commonly found in most garden centers, the Golden Dewdrop is a very useful plant.

Highlighted once as a Florida Plant of the Year, the Golden Dewdrop is native to Tropical America and ranges from the Florida Keys through Mexico and South America. While there may be up to 36 species of *Duranta* throughout the world, the most commonly used species are *Duranta erecta* and *Duranta repens* which have small leaves, and *Duranta stenostachya* also known as the Brazilian Skyflower which has visibly larger leaves. There are many hybrids avail-

able of these species which make up the many cultivars commonly known as Golden Dewdrops. You may also occasionally find this shrub called Pigeon-berry, Honey drops, and Skyflower, but the botanical genus *Duranta* or common name Golden Dewdrop will suffice.

*Duranta* is a very fast-growing shrub with multiple, somewhat floppy branches with light green foliage and truly beautiful blue, lavender, purple, and white flowers. Some flowers even have a white edging on the outer rim of the petals. The fragrant flowers which appear in spring, summer and fall, are very attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds. I have also noticed that carpenter bees are common visitors to these flowers in my yard. The flowers are followed by golden berries that are favored by birds. Be aware how-

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***Duranta erecta* 'variegate'**

photo: [www.botanypictures.com](http://www.botanypictures.com)



***Duranta repens***

photo: [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

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ever that the berries are reportedly poisonous so keep this in mind in keeping kids and pets away or even avoiding planting this shrub altogether.

Golden Dewdrops cultivars should be planted in well-drained locations preferably in a full-sun location. While noted as highly drought tolerant, the Duranta is not salt tolerant, so plant accordingly. Golden Dewdrops can be used as small flowering trees when they are pruned and trained into a single leader. These shrubs are also popular trained into an espalier. The golden form of this plant 'Gold Mound' is often included in planting beds, border plants, and containers. While the green leaf variety along with the blue-purple flowers is attractive as is, the variegated forms with white and green and gold and green add a whole new dimension to color combinations. Some cultivars to look for include 'Alba', the white flowering form; 'Variegata' with white leaf margins and 'Aurea' or 'Aureo-variegata' with yellow variegation and yellow margined variegation, respectfully.

Presently I have the common Golden Dewdrop and 'Gold Mound' in my landscape. The variety of sizes, shapes, foliage, and flower color all work to make this shrub on my list of garden favorites.

Resource:

Culbert, D. Add Drops of Gold to Florida Yards. UF/IFAS Extension Service - Okeechobee County.

Gilman, E. (1999). Duranta repens. UF/IFAS Extension Service.

For more information on all types of shrubs suitable for our Southwest Florida 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.

MONTHLY PLANT CLINICS ARE SATURDAYS FROM 9:00AM-12:00PM.

- **Powell's Nursery** ..... 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of month
- **Peachland Publix**..... 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of month
- **Home Depot (Punta Gorda, Port Charlotte, Englewood)**..... 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of month
- **Lowes** ..... 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of month

PLANT CLINICS 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** 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of month 1:00pm-3:00pm.
- **Punta Gorda Library** 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of month from 10:00am-1:00pm.
- **Edison College Learning Resources Library** 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of month 1:00pm-4:00pm.
- **South Gulf Cove Learning Garden** (13577 Blake Drive, PC) 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of month from 9:00am-12:00pm.

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For more information about our Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program, please contact our FYN Horticulture Program Assistant, Allison Steele, at 941.764.4351. 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.