

Angelonias – Summer Snapdragons

Cultivars of *Angelonia angustifolia*, or summer snapdragons, are available in numerous shades of pink, rose lilac, lavender, purple, and white, and the upright plants produce an abundance of little ¾- to 1-inch flowers over the entire summer season. Research trials have found that once they are established, angelonias are very heat and drought tolerant, and are deer and pest resistant, too. What a perfect combination for the hot, dry summers we usually experience.



Angelonia angustifolia 'AngelMist Dark Rose'
Joey Williamson, HGIC, Clemson Extension

Angelonias are a relatively new arrival to the bedding plant scene, and of the 30 or so species native to Mexico and the West Indies, *Angelonia angustifolia* has been the primary focus of breeders for color selection and sturdiness, avoiding the need to stake. Plant heights will vary by cultivar, but typically in the South, angelonias will get 1 1/2 to 3 feet tall and 1 foot wide. By spacing plants a little closer (at 8 to 9 inches apart), plants will better support each other to remain more upright. This summer annual is a vigorous grower that works well in both the landscape and in larger window boxes

and containers. Additionally, angelonias make splendid cut flowers with their tall straight stems covered with long rows of softly fragrant blooms that gradually open over several weeks.



Angelonia angustifolia 'Angelface Blue'
Joey Williamson, HGIC, Clemson Extension

Angelonias perform best in full sun and are exceptionally drought tolerant. Soils should be well-drained, and once plants are established, the soil can be allowed to dry temporarily between waterings. Plants may be sheared back half way in mid-season if desired, and they will begin to reflower in just 2 to 3 weeks. Angelonias are cold hardy as far north as USDA Zone 9. To keep these tender annuals alive in colder zones, containers should be brought inside during cold weather. Fertilize angelonias every 2 months with a slow-release landscape fertilizer, or a slow-release fertilizer can be incorporated into the soil at planting and then

supplemented with a liquid fertilizer as needed during the summer.

Several new series of patented *Angelonia* cultivars are available, such as AngelMist, Angel Wing, Angelface, Alonia and Carita. Two cultivars that have displayed exceptionally well in the Athens, Georgia trial gardens are 'Carita Raspberry' and AngelMist 'Spreading White'. Most angelonias are purchased as plants, but the new Serena series, distributed by both Park Seed and Harris Seed, is now available as seed.

Propagate angelonias by tip cuttings, division of the root mass, or collected seed. Non-patented cultivars are easily propagated from tip cuttings using a rooting hormone, bottom heat and high relative humidity. Start cuttings about 6 weeks before the first fall frost. They should be well-rooted within 2 to 3 weeks. Root divisions may be made in late summer by simply digging and cutting apart the root mass. These clumps of roots can be potted into 1-gallon containers and over-wintered indoors for replanting in the garden after the last spring frost. Be sure to keep plants in the sunniest and warmest area indoors. Once flowering has ceased, cut the plants back by one half, and allow the soil to dry briefly between waterings during the winter.

Angelonia seeds are small, and can be harvested from seed pods in late summer, dried, and stored in envelopes to plant the following spring. These seeds need light to germinate, and take 7 to 14 days for seedlings to appear. Start seed 6 to 8 weeks before the last anticipated spring frost. Only low light is required for seed germination, but once the seedlings are up, angelonias need a high light level in order to not stretch. When starting angelonias from seed, they may require a total of 13 to 14 weeks from sowing before the first flowers can be expected. Pinching back the seedlings will help improve plant compactness and branching. Seedlings should be fertilized with a liquid fertilizer.



Angelonia angustifolia 'AngelMist Dark Pink'
Joey Williamson, HGIC, Clemson Extension

Angelonias combine well with many annuals and perennials in the landscape garden. Gray-foliaged plants, such as the wormwoods 'Powis Castle' or 'Valerie Finnis', the lamb's ears 'Helen Von Stein' or 'Big Ears', or the silver-leaved *Plectranthus* 'Silver Shield', emphasize the flower color of rose or pink angelonias. Yellow and golden flowered landscape plants, such as *Lantana* 'New Gold', *Coreopsis* 'Zagreb', or any of the black-eyed susans, will compliment the dark lavender-colored angelonias. Whether you start with seeds or plants this spring, adding angelonias to your landscape beds or to large containers will add an impressive season of color.

Prepared by Joey Williamson, HGIC Horticulture Extension Agent, Clemson University. (New 8/10.)

This information is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service is implied. All recommendations are for South Carolina conditions and may not apply to other areas. Use pesticides only according to the directions on the label. All recommendations for pesticide use are for South Carolina only and were legal at the time of publication, but the status of registration and use patterns are subject to change by action of state and federal regulatory agencies. Follow all directions, precautions and restrictions that are listed.