



Snapdragons



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Introduction: Snapdragons, *Antirrhinum majus*, are charming old fashioned flowers. The colors are rich, and they come in three sizes for different uses. Strong-stemmed flower spikes are tightly packed with large "dragons" in white, yellow, purple, crimson, bronze, pink in a range of hues. Long lasting flowers are so profuse that they can hide the leaves at peak bloom. These plants are stunning in a landscape with flowers blooming continuously from the lower portion of the stock to the upper most end as they mature. Snapdragons originally get their name from the fact that they look like the mouth of a dragon and children sometimes pick off the flowers and put their fingers into the top and bottom portion of the "dragon mouth" and make them open and close.

Varieties: There are over 230 commercially available varieties available. The varieties range from tall, medium and short varieties ranging from 6 inches to as tall as 4 feet.

History: Snapdragons are native to the Mediterranean.

Landscape Use and Planting: Snapdragons can be planted from mid-September through late winter in Southern California. Snapdragons are used as a cool-season annual because they stop blooming once temperatures regularly hit 80 degrees F. Snapdragons will grow in full sun to partial shade. They are perennials (return year after year) in the mildest urban areas of California (zones 9 to 11). However, for best growth, they need cool weather when young. December is a great time to plant.

Space the smaller varieties six to eight inches apart and the taller varieties 12 inches apart. Remove dead flowers. Trim faded flowers to promote longer bloom. If flowers stop blooming in mid summer, trim back by 1/3 to 2/3, to encourage new growth and blooming. Keep the plants deadheaded for longer bloom. Tall snapdragons are great for flower arrangements and are stunning in beds along walls or walkways.

Fertilization: Snapdragons need fertile, well drained soil in full sun. When you cut back the blooms and even some stems to about 4 inches, they will bounce back if the weather remains cool. Keep them well watered!

Irrigation: Water them from underneath, using drip, bubbler or flood irrigation, not overhead to help prevent rust a disease they are prone to.

Pest Management: Snapdragons are susceptible to several Fungal diseases including rust, stem rot, black root rot, damping off, downy mildew, powdery mildew, verticillium wilt and gray mold. Find out more at [Snapdragon Pests and Diseases](#).

