

Bell County Master Gardeners

Tip of the week

By Myra Crenshaw

“Angel’s Trumpet: Propagation made Easy”

A plant to consider that propagates easily and well is the Angel’s Trumpet. It is a perfect backdrop for many gardens and is unusual enough to elicit many comments and raves from those who see it! Just consider the growth size in the spot picked to plant it. The beautiful hanging trumpet-shaped flower is perfect for use at the back of the landscape because it can grow 6-20 feet tall and 10-15 feet wide with a vase shape. It can also be planted in a large pot for use on a patio or indoor. Just remember to bring it in when it gets cool. Common names are Angel's trumpet, brugmansia, tree datura, and angel star. Like some other beautiful plants, you must be careful because it is poisonous. All parts of *Brugmansia* are poisonous and you certainly don't want to ingest it because it can paralyze, cause dry mouth, diarrhea, migraine headaches, visual and auditory hallucinations. Be especially cautious if you have small children or pets living with you. Datura's flowers can come in shades of white, peach, pink, orange or yellow. They are quite showy and draw much attention. They can flower year-round in the warmer climates. Here in Central Texas just before the freezes, my friend prunes hers down to the ground and it comes out again in the spring. It really completes her landscaping on the front of her house with height, color, and is something unique. In addition, when pruning the plant, the canes can be propagated very easily. Just stick them in a rooting hormone, put in a pot, and then watch them grow! This year, she actually made 50 cuttings for all her friends just that easily. You can buy the rooting hormone at any gardening center.

When the angel's trumpet is young, if you would like to grow it in tree form, you must train a central leader. Pruning is really not necessary unless it is getting in your way and should be done in the fall, keeping 6-10 nodes on the branches above the Y for flowers the next year. Datura really likes acidic soil the best, though it can tolerate alkaline as well. It is not drought resistant, so it needs to be watered well and often. If it is planted in a pot, make sure there is adequate drainage.

Propagating while preparing for the onset of winter, many gardeners cut back before freezes and try to save favorite plants for their return in spring. I have joined their ranks by taking a two foot piece of Plumeria stalk, wrapping it in paper, putting it in the garage until the freezes are no longer, and then planting it in a growing medium in spring. And I am awaiting the arrival of my Angel's Trumpet with great anticipation! Have any questions about gardening in Central Texas? Contact ask.bcmga@gmail.com

