



Beautiful, but dangerous:

Angel trumpets and purple angels bloom most of the year

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Pink angel trumpet blooms



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About 25 years ago a good friend gave me a pot containing an angel trumpet plant. It was love at first sight. Forward a few years later and almost every neighbor on our block was sporting their own angel trumpet plant.

Angel trumpet (*Brugmansia*) plants can grow to be 6 to 12 feet high. The flowers can be white, yellow, peach or orange. The pendulous blooms face downward and are up to 6-inches in length. They are very fragrant at night. I remember when we used to live in an older home that had an attic fan. When we turned the fan on in the evening, the Angel trumpet's wonderful fragrance would make the whole house smell wonderful.

This plant is very easy to propagate, which is the reason most of my neighbors have one. Just cut off a limb, put it in moist, well drained potting soil in a sunny place and it should root in a couple of weeks.

This plant loves moist soil and is a heavy feeder. I sprinkle mine with an organic granular fertilizer about once a month.

The Angel trumpet plant can grow as an annual in hardiness zones 7 and 8, and as a perennial in zones 9-11. Victoria is in hardiness zone 9a, but even after our worst freeze, my angel trumpet came back. It needs six to eight hours of sun per day and it will bloom spring through fall.

You can make it look like a tree if you cut off the suckers near the base. Personally, I prefer to let mine do its own thing.

Angel trumpets can attract some pests such as spider mites, white flies and aphids. Usually I do not have any problems. If I do, I just spray it with Neem oil, which is my organic go-to problem solver.

Now the bad news, this plant is toxic if ingested. It is in the nightshade family, (Solanaceae). So if you have pets, family, or friends that eat your plants, angel trumpets are not for you.

And the good news, because this plant is poisonous the deer will not touch it. Yeah!



Yellow angel trumpet



Cascade of yellow angel trumpets

Another favorite of mine is the purple double angel (Datura), also known as devil's trumpet, horn of plenty and purple Hindu. It comes from India and Southeast Asia. It is a second cousin to the angel trumpet. It can grow up to 6-feet tall and the upward facing flowers are 6 to 8t-inches long. It blooms spring through fall. Keep it moist, but do not drown it.

It grows best in full sun. It can grow in partial shade but will be leggier and have few flowers.

Propagation is a breeze. After the flowers drop, a seed pod develops about the size of a golf ball. Pick the pod right after it starts to open up. Remove the seeds and let them completely dry. I usually store my seeds in a paper envelope. You will end up with a lot of seeds that you can plant and share with friends. You can also propagate this plant by taking cuttings. The datura will freeze, but not worry, you have already collected a ton of seeds.

You can also grow this plant in a pot and move it inside near a sunny spot during the winter. If you grow this plant in a pot, do not overwater. It is susceptible to root rot.

Again, this plant is also in the nightshade family. The blooms, leaves and stem are poisonous. Be careful when handling this plant.

Aphids, whiteflies, tomato hornworms and sphinx moths are common pests, but a little squirt with Neem oil will fix the problem. So add some color to your landscape and tell the deer to take a hike. Enjoy.



Devil's Trumpet—Datura

The Gardener's Dirt is written by members of the Victoria County Master Gardener Association, an educational outreach of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Victoria County. Mail your questions in care of the Advocate, P.O. Box 1518, Victoria, TX 77901; or vcmg@vicad.com, or comment on this column at [Victoria Advocate.com](http://VictoriaAdvocate.com).

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Photos contributed by Carla Rodriguez