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Growing Snapdragons: A Complete Guide



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Learn how to plant, grow, and care for snapdragon flowers

By [Andy Wilcox](#)

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Snapdragons are favorites in our flower garden. Their spiked flowers come in many bright colors and mingle well in the garden. They're easy to grow from seed, bloom in the cooler weather of spring and fall, and can even tolerate light frosts. Learn how to plant, grow, and care for snapdragons.

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Snapdragons (*Antirrhinum majus*) are colorful spiked beauties that are generally cool-season flowers that bloom reliably. They are cut-and-come-again flowers, and they're easy to start from seed or buy at the garden center in spring. With almost every color combo imaginable, snapdragons fit any aesthetic and grow well in containers.

Though technically tender perennials hardy in USDA zones 8-11, gardeners in other zones treat snapdragons as annuals. That said, breeders have developed many varieties that do well right through the summer.

They are categorized into four groups based on their temperature and daylight preferences. Group 1 and 2 snapdragons do well in the shorter days and cooler temperatures of spring and early autumn. In contrast, Group 3 and 4 snapdragons don't mind the heat and longer midsummer days and will reliably bloom right in the hottest part of the year.

eties can reach 4–5 feet tall. They are fantastic cut flowers and, with proper harvesting, will last for a week or more in the vase.

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*Antirrhinum 'Pretty in Pink' is a fantastic new perennial snapdragon.
Credit: Twabian*

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- [How to Grow Gerbera Daisies: The](#)

- [How to Grow Ranunculus: The Complete Guide](#)

PLANTING

Snapdragons are easy to start indoors from seed but take quite a while to be ready for transplanting. When planting them out in the garden, choose a spot in full or partial sunshine with fertile, well-drained soil. They aren't picky about soil type but will do best with a near-neutral soil pH.

Snapdragons are one of the earliest seeds you'll start in preparation for spring, so don't forget about them. If you did let the time slip by, they're easy to find at garden centers in four packs. Choose small, thick-stemmed plants that have not yet started to bloom.

When to Plant Snapdragons

their seedling stage. As long as the soil has begun to warm, they can be transplanted outdoors several weeks before the last frost.

Transplant snapdragons out into garden beds when the nighttime temperatures are hovering around freezing. Try to avoid a hard frost, but if the thermometer touches 32°F, they'll be fine. Of course, they can also be planted outdoors later when you get around to planting other flowers and vegetables.

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Young Snapdragon flower seedlings in their propagation tray. Credit: AboPhotography

How to Plant Snapdragons

- If you grow snapdragons indoors, sow 8–10 weeks before planting them outdoors.
- Use soil blocks or cell trays filled with premoistened seed starting mix.
- Sow 1–2 seeds per cell or one per soil block, leaving the soil right on the surface but pressing it lightly to make good contact with the soil.
Snapdragons need light to germinate, so don't bury them.
- To preserve humidity, cover the trays with a humidity dome or plastic wrap and place them in a warm, bright location.

During the wait, check the moisture level to ensure they haven't dried out.

- Once they've germinated, remove the humidity dome and place them under bright light. They get leggy quickly if not given enough light. A grow light for 12 hours per day works well.

Tip: Snapdragon seeds are tiny and charcoal in color, making them nearly impossible to handle. I use the toothpick method.

1. Pour your snapdragon seeds into a small glass bowl or jar lid.
2. Dip the end of a toothpick into the water, then touch it to the seed. The seed will stick to the toothpick, which you can then pick up and transfer to the soil.
3. Gently wipe the seed off on the soil surface, then use the toothpick to lightly press the seed down into the soil where it will stick.

GROWING

months. If you haven't harvested the flowers, deadhead them to encourage more blooms.

- Check the soil moisture with your fingers. If it's dry an inch down, it's time to water.
- Mulching snapdragons keeps the soil shaded, helps maintain moisture, and cools soil temperatures. Of course, it also keeps the weeds down.
- Pinch young snapdragon plants when they are about 4–6 inches tall, removing the center growing tip. While it seems heartless, it will make the plant form a bushier, fuller plant, and you'll get many more blooms over the season.
- Some snapdragon varieties get quite tall and can be prone to flopping over after a storm. Use netting or staking to keep them upright so the flower stalks stay straight.

Types

- The Potomac series is a Group 3-4

white, red, orange, yellow, pink, and bicolor blooms. 'Potomac Appleblossom' is one of my favorites every year.

- Avignon series snapdragons are Group 2 cool-season performers, although they are more tolerant of heat than other Group 2 snaps. Sturdy stems and bright colors make a splash when not much else is blooming in the flower garden.
- The Chantilly snapdragons are Group 1-2 flowers with a unique open face instead of the typical closed bloom. They are quite stunning, and easy for pollinators to access, but are best grown in the cooler months.
- Snapdragons in the Madame Butterfly series are double-petaled, sometimes called azalea-type snapdragons. They have a puffy or fluffy appearance and are a Group 3-4 performer.

HARVESTING

- Harvest snapdragons in the morning

- For the best vase life, choose snaps that have opened about a third of the way up the flower stalk.
- Cut deeply, almost to the base of the plant. Leave only 2–4 sets of leaves on the stalk, cut the rest. Your snaps will put up new long stems (short stems are hard to use in a bouquet).
- Place harvested snaps in water quickly and keep them vertical.

GARDENING PRODUCTS

PESTS/DISEASES

- Snapdragons in the seedling stage started indoors are susceptible to the same issues, such as fungus gnats and damping off, as other seedlings.
- Outdoors, snapdragons are sometimes pestered by powdery mildew, but usually are pest-free.

WIT AND WISDOM

- To make a snapdragon talk, grasp a fully opened blossom (on a traditional snapdragon flower) between your thumb and forefinger. Gently squeeze, and the bloom will pop open and shut as you apply pressure and release like a puppet. Be careful not to choose an occupied blossom, or the bee inside will have something to say about it.
- Snapdragons will curve away from gravity (called geotropism) to continue growing straight up. If they flop over in a storm, you'll only have a couple of hours to straighten them before they all curve and become difficult to use in a bouquet.

FLOWERS

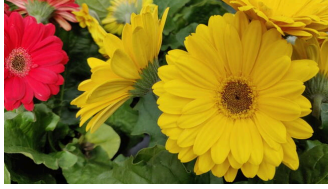
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Wilcox



Andy Wilcox is a flower farmer and master gardener with a passion for soil health, small produc-

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Kristine (not verified) 2 months ago

One of my new garden flowers. The deer have not tried to eat them, Yet... I can't grow much anymore because of the deer and was glad to find that they didn't like these so far.

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