

## Pigeon Berry, *Sky Flower*

### GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean, sub-tropical
Vigour	: fairly fast growing
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out, cuttings
Maintenance	: low

### CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (1500 ppm)
Hardiness	: -6°C

### SHAPE

Type	: shrub, tree
Height	: 1.5 m-6 m
Spread	: 2 m-5 m
Foliage	: semi-evergreen

### FLOWER

Colour	: light blue, light lilac
Size	: 10 cm - 15 cm
Period	: May - September

### FRUIT

Type of fruit	: berry
Fruit size	: 1 cm - 1.2 cm

The Pigeon Berry is a popular shrub that grows vigorously some 4 metres high and almost as wide. It originates from tropical America and northwards to the dry climates of California. Frequently sold as *D. repens* it is particularly successful in Arriyadh, where it is usually planted to make a hedge. Evergreen leaves are serrated, glossy and have a lush impact with their rich-green colour. They are arranged oppositely along slender branches that may sometimes have a few thorns. Variegated cultivars are frequently grown and savoured for resisting sun without their white margins getting burnt. The bright yellow leaves of *Duranta erecta* 'Aurea' are highly ornamental. It is therefore also known as Golden Dewdrop. In summer, both cultivars and the species have lilac or lavender flowers with white edges that appear in loose, drooping clusters to attract butterflies. They are gradually replaced by pea-sized berries that attract the eye with their bright orange splendour; they also emit a pleasant vanilla scent. Apart from good drainage, they do not demand much, tolerating an average soil and both full sun and partial shade. Light frosts are tolerated to about -6°C. With its weeping shape, it makes a good specimen when mature. The species is easily multiplied by seeds, and the varieties may be propagated by cuttings. Maintenance is low, if a freely growing shrub is required: occasional cutting back may be required. If cut into a hedge, care should be taken to provide a slant, so that light reaches the lower branches, keeping them green.

