

Snapdragon, *thum as samaka*, *anf ath thor*

GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean
Vigour	: fairly fast growing
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid
Propagation	: direct sowing, cuttings, division
Maintenance	: moderate

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: high
Salinity/ppm	: low (1000 ppm)
Hardiness	: 0°C

SHAPE

Type	: biennial
Height	: 0.2 m-1 m
Spread	: 0.6 m-1.2 m
Foliage	: semi-evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: yellow, pink, red, white, orange, secondary: yellow
Size	: 3 cm - 4.5 cm
Period	: March - October
Smell	: scented, strong, flower

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: capsule
Fruit size	: 1.2 cm

Seemingly more appropriate for a European garden in summer, this showy herbaceous perennial (Arabic name: *thum as samaka*) is grown principally in the Arriyadh region and other arid regions for its bright-coloured flowers and is treated as a biennial, i.e. it is sown and grown in the summer and planted out for winter colour as soon as temperatures begin to fall. In the following year, the plant begins to burn as temperatures rise again, and it is normally removed. In sheltered places, however, it may persist. Its tubular, faintly scented flowers on vertical spikes with their many different colours are striking in massed planting. There are many varieties, some over 1 metre tall, others dwarf in form. *A. majus* requires well-fertilised, friable, rich soil of neutral pH and a sunny position with regular watering, although the soil should be well-drained and not become too wet in winter. When planted densely, it is a good plant for the garden border. Interesting for children to watch, the plants are pollinated by bees, and the flowers close over the insects when they enter, depositing pollen on them. Propagation is by seed. As a garden plant and a perfect cut flower, it will need the usual attention to keep it flowering, such as deadheading, and they should be pinched back to encourage a bushy habit and flowers. Leaves can be susceptible to rust.

