Angelonia: At Attention

Tommy Johnston

Serena angelonia (Angelonia angustifolia) has three characteristics that the every gardener gets excited about when told, “This plant is drought tolerant, heat tolerant and low maintenance.” The mounding and upright growth habit of Serena angelonia makes it an excellent item for a 4.5-in. pot or a mixed container that will increase in bloom volume as the temperature rises.

Serena angelonia has a 12-week crop time from seed in early spring, but decreases to 10 weeks as the days get longer and warmer. It has no serious disease or insect problems, and it doesn’t require pinching, as this will keep the plant from blooming.

Plug Propagation
Serena angelonia will germinate in five days when sown in well-drained media with a pH of 5.5 to 6.0. Leave the seeds uncovered and maintain at least 1,000 footcandles of light during initial germination. Once the seed is germinated, increase light to 2,000 footcandles and keep the soil moist. Seedlings will not revive from being dry. Growth regulators are usually not needed during plug production, but if needed, use B-Nine at a 5,000 ppm spray.

Potting Plugs
Plugs can be transplanted into a 4.5-in. pot, two plants per pot, with an initial fertilizer charge in the well-drained media. The media pH should be 5.5 to 6.2. Maintain a nighttime temperature of 65F (18C) or higher with a high light volume during the day of at least 5,000 footcandles. This will get the plants off to a great start. Fertilize weekly with 200 ppm nitrogen in a complete fertilizer and be sure not to over water or under water the plants until they are established. PGRs can be used two weeks after transplanting. A tank mix of B-Nine at 2,500 ppm and Cycocel at 1,000 ppm is the best for this angelonia.

Some Like It Hot
As the days get longer and the temperature increases, Serena angelonia, also known as summer snapdragon, will increase in bloom power. They will take full sun and will grow 10 to 12 in. in height and 12 to
14 in. in width. Fertilize every two weeks, but be sure not to over water mature plants. These are drought-tolerant plants that perform best in high humidity and extreme heat. Serena angelonia comes in four colors—Lavender, Lavender Pink, White and Purple. All perform equally well and are gaining popularity in the patio garden world. GT

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