GROWERTALKS

Culture Notes

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Extend Your Profits with Angelonia

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Season extenders are an important category that growers should include in their bedding plant programs to enhance their assortment. These are the plants with proven heat performance that offer late-season color for gardeners and extend your selling season well past the rush of Mother's Day.

One of the ultimate season extenders is angelonia. There are so many things to love about this class! For instance, extreme heat and humidity are no match for it. It tolerates hot and dry conditions for low-maintenance care in the garden. It has attractive, orchid-like blooms (this class is often called the "summer snapdragon") that are deer- and rabbit-resistant and drought-tolerant once established. And it's an ideal choice for combos paired with other heat-lovers, like lantana and cuphea, for long-lasting color displays.

Pictured: Angelonia AngelFlare (left) and Angelonia Archangel (right).

National Garden Bureau has declared 2024 as the Year of the Angelonia, and with this designation, extra attention from consumers is expected as they gain more exposure to all the features and benefits of this class.

To meet this growing need of top-performing angelonia, Ball FloraPlant offers a wide diversity across five series and habits, including super-spreading AngelMist, new AngelFlare for a v-shaped look, big blooms with Archangel, and taller varieties of AngelDance and new Guardian Angel.

Let's take a closer look at some of the different categories found in angelonia and provide a few production and finishing tips to get your greenhouse geared up for next year's sales.

Spreading: Starting out, we have Ball FloraPlant's Angelonia AngelMist. This series is a great choice for 10- to 12-in. hanging baskets. The habit is low and spreading, which means you can also use this as a groundcover or as a filler/spiller in mixed combinations.

Medium: New for 2025 sales is the Angelonia AngelFlare series and it does just what the name implies—it flares out, especially throughout combos. The habit is more of a v-shape, which branches out and fits well into gallons, but also helps create an interesting contrast within garden designs. There's also a unique, never-before-seen black variety that adds a sophisticated accent for mixes.

Upright: Moving on to Ball FloraPlant's upright series is Angelonia Archangel. This is the "workhorse" of the angelonia lineup, as it has medium vigor and the traditional upright habit. Archangel is also available in the most colors (10) including a bicolor and a modern, dark-red hue called Ruby Sangria launched in 2024. It has large-size blooms and is versatile, fitting many pot and container sizes. Growers can use it as an upright component in mixed combos or it can be sized-up for gallon pots specifically for use in the landscape.

Large: Speaking of landscapes, one of my favorite most recent introductions is the Angelonia AngelDance series. These angelonia have bicolor blooms in Fuchsia and Violet, and the stems are flexible, which helps them whimsically "dance" in the wind. They look fantastic in cottage garden designs or large patio pots. Very reminiscent of the aesthetic offered by foxglove or larkspur flowers.

Vigorous: Last, but certainly not least, is the brand-new Angelonia Guardian Angel series, launching with two colors for Spring 2025 sales. This series helps watch over the garden; it's 30% taller and more vigorous than Archangel. It's a series especially helpful for Northern growers. Sometimes that region needs to have a little more vigor in the centerpiece of a combo and that's what Guardian Angel offers by flowering earlier with less light. That means Northern growers can finish on time for their markets. You can also use this series as a back-of-the-border premium item. I think it'll really drive a lot of interest in what I like to call "50-mph color" in the landscape.

Propagation guide

Ball FloraPlant delivers quality cuttings (rooted and unrooted) to customers exclusively through Ball Seed with URCs available from our Las Limas farm in Nicaragua. For the best success, you'll want to reduce the time from when you receive your cuttings to when they're stuck—shorten the time from the box to the bench. (Check out our "Grow a Better Liner" video series online at ballfloraplant.com for many helpful tips and preparation guidelines.)

The recommended URC storage temperature for angelonia is 50 to 55F (10 to 12.7C). When you're ready to stick, you'll need an average mist of seven to nine days. It takes an average of eight to 10 days for angelonia to root. To avoid stretch, a pinch is recommended 18 to 21 days after sticking (before transplant).

A toned liner will be better prepared for the stress of transplanting, so don't overlook this step. Change the plant's environment! Reduce the humidity, increase the air movement, and provide higher light levels and cooler temperatures for the best chances of success post-transplant.

Finishing

When finishing your angelonia crop, provide a soil pH of 5.8 to 6.2 with light levels of 6,000 to 10,000 f.c. High light will significantly improve plant quality by encouraging branching, promote earlier flowering and achieve the ideal plant habit growth. Fertilizer should also be applied at 175 to 225 N. Plant growth regulators are generally not needed, but a B-Nine (spray) 1,500 to 3,000 ppm and Cycocel 750 to 1,000 ppm tank mix(es) can be used. Avoid Florel use.

Temperatures

Day: 74 to 85F (23 to 29C)

Night: 62 to 70F (17 to 21C)

Insects/diseases

Pests to watch out for are whitefly and caterpillars, and some bothersome diseases are root rot and Botrytis. To avoid these, follow good sanitation practices, especially during the pinching process (fresh pairs of gloves, sanitized hands, disinfected scissors, etc.).

Overall, angelonia are a not-too-finicky crop to propagate and finish. And with so many benefits and versatile uses for today's gardener, it's a must-have class in your program. So if you're looking to extend your profits this season,

look no further than the diverse season-extending assortment of angelonia from Ball FloraPlant. **GT**

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