



Angelonia Actor Series

By Steve Jones

Angelonia is a genus of almost 30 species native to Central and South America. Our current commercial varieties have been developed primarily from hybrids of two species, *Angelonia angustifolia* and *Angelonia integerrima*. Angelonia is a perennial in its native tropical habitat (Hardiness Zones of 9 to 11) but is used primarily as an annual flowering crop for spring planting.

Angelonia has been referred to as “a warm season snapdragon” because of its similar flowers and ability to be grown easily during summer’s warm temperatures. Fifteen years ago the popularity of angelonia came about initially by developing virus- and disease-free stock of the original vegetative varieties like ‘Alba’, ‘Hilo Blue’ and ‘Blue Pacific’. These “cleaned varieties” produced faster growing and more uniform crops. From that point, breeding took over yielding striking flower colors, tall growing forms with large stems and flowers, more compact series with many mid-sized flowers and semi-upright structures displaying a weeping plant form. Even a seed line has been developed filling the need for a very compact form with a multitude of small flowers.

Drought and heat tolerance are both attributes of this genera, which is recognized as a high-performance component to the landscape. In warm temperature regions, angelonia is a staple for commercial plantings and will grow superbly in the same areas with lantana, pentas and annual vinca. In mass plantings, the colors and form are stunning.

Architecturally, Actors will finish a perfect hanging basket with their weeping form. They possess a semi-upright habit on a well-branched frame, which can be handled without concern of damage to stems and flowers. Actors have medium-sized flowers and will highlight mixed containers with an upright element. Finishing plant height will be 10-14 inches with an 8- to

This new series really puts on a show in the landscape or even hanging baskets with its striking color selection, semi-upright habit and large stems.

10-inch spread. The series selections include Pink, Purple and White displaying a great amount of color throughout the summer season.

Temperature

Recommended temperature is 62-65° F nights and a minimum of 65° F days. Allowing day temperatures to reach 85-95° F is not problematic for good-quality growth. Angelonia thrive in warm temperature conditions. Too cool of temperatures will slow growth and delay flowering, adding to total crop time.

Media, pH & Fertilizer

Transplant into a well-drained soil. Water thoroughly and let soil dry completely between irrigations. Avoid consistently wet media or root rot problems may develop. The first indication of prolonged wet soil conditions may be yellowing of foliage and weak growth.

Optimum soil pH should be maintained at 5.5-6.2. An optimum EC would be 1.0-1.6.

Feed with a balanced fertilizer including minor elements at 150- to 250-ppm nitrogen. When using a soilless mix or if irrigating with an alkaline water source, additional iron or manganese may be required to maintain proper green foliage color.

Pinching

After transplant, a soft pinch is recommended once the plant is established but before the stem becomes tough. For larger containers, an additional pinch may be useful. Angelonia can be trimmed or sheared to push a new set of flowers. Remove spent flower stems to promote new growth and keep plants tidy.


Growth Regulation

Actors should not require growth regulators, but if necessary use registered products at labeled rates. Rates will vary greatly with growing conditions. High light and limiting soil moisture will control the height much more effectively than any chemical. Shearing of mature plants can also be classified as controlling height. Removing older flower stems rejuvenates plants and promotes new leaves and flowers.

Pests & Disease

Pests to watch for are aphids, mites and thrips. Common diseases are Pythium, Phytophthora and Rhizoctonia. Drench regularly with preventative fungicides to control root/stem disease issues. Proper cultural practices will reduce disease pressures. Allow soil to dry between irrigations, and good air circulation allows foliage to dry before sunset. Remove spent flower stems to keep plants clean of refuse.

Other Guidelines

Maintain 2,500-5,000 foot-candles to build a strong plant structure and finish a high-quality crop. High light growing conditions and controlling soil moisture may eliminate the need for any use of PGRs to control height. Flowering is not related to day length but is dependent on total light accumulation and warm growing temperatures. 

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