



'Buttery Dragon'



'Peachy Dragon'



'Rosey Dragon'

# Antirrhinum Dragon Series

Ease in production and versatility in use make the Dragon series a product worth trying

By Rebecca Siemonsma

The antirrhinum Dragon series from the Ecke Ranch offers growers a new face in the snapdragon class. Dragons' flowers have a unique and interesting open-faced form. The plants are very floriferous, upright and compact. Dragons can be grown in a variety of container sizes. They are also ideal in mixed containers with other early spring items such as diascia, nemesia, pansies, violas or osteospermum. They even make a stunning combination planter and can be grown successfully with Regal geraniums. Dragons are day neutral and have shown good levels of heat tolerance when shade is provided. There are three colors in the series: Buttery, Rosey and Peachy.

## Propagation

In propagation the Dragons should be stuck using one cutting per cell. They should be stuck in sticking order with other items such as lantana, nemesia, diascia or double impatiens. Bottom heat is beneficial; maintain media at 72° F. Monitor soil temperature closely as misting will likely cool the media. Rooting hormone is beneficial; dip cuttings in a product containing 3,000-ppm IBA. Medium mist level is required. Antirrhinum have a small leaf surface area so over misting will easily over saturate media and delay rooting. Ideally cuttings should not be misted after Day 5-7. Dragons will stretch easily, especially with too much mist. Apply a tank mix of B-Nine (daminozide) at 2,500 ppm and Cycocel (chlormequat chloride) at 1,000 ppm on Day 5-7. This application can be repeated 14 days later if necessary. Pinching is necessary to promote branching. Pinch cuttings Day 7-10 or once roots have begun to go form. Rooting cycle for the Dragons is five weeks. 'Rosey Dragon' will be slower to root than 'Buttery Dragon' or 'Peachy Dragon'.

## Finishing

The Dragons are best suited for greenhouse production in the early to main spring production season when temperatures are naturally cool for best flowering. They can be grown with other cool spring crops such as pansies, viola or osteospermum, for example. Transplant to a well-drained, sterile media that has good aeration

and a pH adjusted to 5.5. Establish with warmer temperatures (68° F); once established temperatures can be reduced to 55-65° F. Dragons can be grown warmer but flower quantity and quality will not be as good and may result in stretched plants. Growing cooler than recommended temperatures will extend crop timing. Pinch plants once the root system is established. Plants should be ready to pinch about 14 days after transplant. Florel (ethephon) should not be used at pinch or as a growth regulator on antirrhinum. Soil should be kept evenly moist; soil that is too dry may result in foliar damage.

Light levels should be bright for strongest growth. Once established, maintain light levels at 4,000-5,000 foot-candles. Plants will tolerate higher light if they aren't moisture stressed also.

Fertilize the Dragons with constant liquid feed at 250 ppm using a fertilizer complete with minor elements. Extra calcium will also strengthen the stems. Maintain media pH at 5.5-5.8 and EC at 1.5-2.0. Leach periodically to reduce salt levels. Growth regulating should not be necessary if plants are grown with adequate light and cool temperatures. If necessary, Dragons respond to Bonzi (paclobutrazol) as a spray at 5-10 ppm.

Insect concerns include thrips, spider mites, fungus gnats and aphids. Potential disease concerns include Botrytis, Thielaviopsis, Pythium, Rhizoctonia, Downy Mildew and Powdery Mildew. Routine fungicide sprays and environmental management will minimize the risk of disease problems.

Production time in 4-inch pots and quarts is seven to 10 weeks from transplant. Production time in 6-inch and gallon containers is nine to 12 weeks from transplant.

The unique flower form of the Dragons combined with their day neutrality make them a great addition to early spring production. Open-faced flowers offer a new and interesting look in the antirrhinum class. For questions about Dragon antirrhinum, log on the On Board Ecke Tech Help bulletin board. [\[E\]](#)

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