Looking for a classic cool-season flower that has multiple uses in the garden, smells great, attracts pollinators and comes in scads of colors? Then you should be planting snapdragons.

For some gardeners, snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus*) is one of those flowers that evokes memories of their parents’ or grandparents’ garden. It is a nostalgic plant that can foster an emotional tie to the past. Today’s newer varieties still offer that nostalgia but with better garden performance that make it easier for the average gardener to have a successful crop. Tall varieties can be cut for use in floral arrangements and dwarf and medium varieties can be used in containers and garden plantings.

The scent of snapdragons is another benefit often overlooked. Shoppers walking through a landscape or passing a display of snapdragons in a garden center will be attracted to the fragrant flowers. The fragrance is especially noticeable in mass plantings.

Snapdragons are attractive to pollinators, including hummingbirds, bumble bees and other larger size bees. They’re not the best honey bee attractor because the flowers are a little heavy for the bees to access. Bonus: snapdragons are not a preferred food choice of deer and rabbits!

**Origins**
Snapdragons are native to the Mediterranean region and parts of the Middle East and North Africa. Snapdragons are usually grown as an annual in most U.S. gardens even though plants are winter hardy in USDA Zones 7-10. The dragon-shaped, tubular flowers come in a variety of colors including pastels and bicolors. With the bicolors the throat is usually white and the lip of the flowers is another color. The only flower color that is not available is a true blue.

**When to plant**
Generally, snapdragons are treated as annuals because they’re not that hardy. However, for Southern gardeners, snapdragons can be used as biennials, just like pansies. They will usually last longer when used for fall color then left alone in cooler months only to bounce back as robust spring plants. As Southern temperatures start to rise to 80ºF or more, flowering typically slows down and the plant may go semi-dormant.

In moderate climates like what occurs in Midwest states, plants will stop flowering under warmer summer temperatures or produce only a few flowers. The flowering period can be prolonged if spent flowers are removed from the plants. If the temperatures become too hot, the plants may not survive. Once the temperatures cool off, plants take off and start to flower again.
A Variety of Sizes for Multiple Uses
Snapdragons come in a range of heights: dwarf (6-10 inches wide, 10-12 inches wide), medium (16-24 inches tall, 12-18 inches wide) and tall (24-30 inches tall, 14-16 inches wide). Dwarf types are currently the most common snapdragons found at garden centers. Their compact habit makes them ideal for sales in packs and pots and for multiple applications in garden plantings and in containers for porch and patio. Dwarf series include: Candy Tops, Crackle and Pop, Floral Showers, Palette, Snappy, Snapshot, Twinny and the newest introduction Snaptini.
Medium series include: Liberty Classic, Solstice, Speedy Sonnet and Sonnet.
Tall series include: Madame Butterfly and Rocket.
Snaptastic is a new type of intermediate height snapdragon that combines the bushy habit of dwarf types with taller flower stems typical of the medium types. Snaptastic offers better branching in the garden and requires less staking, but retains the classic look of traditional snapdragons.
The Candy Showers series is unique as the first trailing snapdragon series from seed. It is ideal for hanging baskets, window boxes and patio containers.

Garden How-To Tips
Like many annuals, snapdragons can be started indoors from seed. Your local retailer will carry seed packets as well as young, transplantable plants. Because snapdragons can tolerate cold temperatures, they are often one of the first flowers along with pansies, violas, early spring perennials and bulb crops that gardeners can plant in the spring. In the garden, the tall types should be staked as needed to prevent them from falling over and breaking. They can become top heavy because of their large flowers.

Removing dead flowers is a good practice to ensure flowers keep initiating. If plants start to set too much seed, then the plants just peter out. Removing old flowers can also help to prevent gray mold disease (Botrytis).

Managing water is important, especially if gardeners are growing the medium to tall types. The plants have a fibrous root system and if they don’t become established in the soil, they will fall over. Snapdragons should be fed with a low-dose slow-release fertilizer like other bedding plants.

If you’re looking for flowers with multiple colors, different flower shapes, different sizes and great fragrance, you can’t go wrong planting snapdragons.

The National Garden Bureau recognizes and thanks David Kuack and Syngenta Flowers as author sand contributors to this fact sheet
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