



Angel Trumpets by Sheri Ann Richardson

For the night garden, Daturas and Brugmansias are a necessity. These beautiful fragrant plants, commonly known as Angel's Trumpet open up after dark and remain open until the sunlight hits them the next morning.

There is no sight like that of an Angel Trumpet heavy with blossoms. The perfume that the flowers release is an extremely sweet, intoxicating scent. These plants will bloom year round if given the proper care.

Keeping Your Angel Trumpet Healthy

Hailing from South America, these beauties prefer damp conditions with warm days and cool nights. Angel Trumpets are in the Solanaceae family, which is the same family that tomatoes, potatoes and petunias are in. However, a word of caution: Angel Trumpets are extremely toxic.

Once you have acquired an Angel Trumpet, the next step is to keep it healthy. First you will need to make sure if you choose to grow yours in a pot that the pot and the plant are both well balanced so the wind cannot knock it over. The limbs of these plants break fairly easily, and although this will allow you to multiply your collection easily, the trick is to grow your Angel Trumpet into a large size tree for maximum blooms. Remember to leave enough room at the top of the pot to thoroughly water it. They need a lot of water and can handle being watered daily in the hot summer months.

Be sure to fertilize your plants with a good fertilizer at least every two to three weeks so your plant will produce a maximum amount of blooms. A commonly used fertilizer such as Miracle-Gro, Peters, or Andersons 17-17-17 is a good choice. If your plant is in the ground, a fertilizer of 15-5-10 can be used. To boost the foliage on your Angel Trumpet, a good dose of ammonium nitrate (34-0-0) applied in early spring and late summer, is best. Use approximately three tablespoons for every two gallons of water that is applied. Ironite can also be applied once every season with the exception of winter. Another suggestion would be to give your plant some shade during the hot part of the day. Angel Trumpet's prefer full sun, but the heat from the sun can result in slowed growth, sparse or no blooms and leaf loss.

Providing Optimal Growing Conditions

If you live in zone 9, these are long-lived perennials, but if you are in zone 8 or lower and the roots should freeze, they will die. The best thing to do is over winter them in a sunny window or prunes them back and store them in a cool, dark place such as a basement.

Companion Planting

Whether you are growing Angel Trumpets in a container or in the ground, you may find that planting other plants around them can create a pleasing effect. Depending on where you live, and whether the plants are in the ground or in a container will play a major role in determining your choices.

Some pleasing combinations for perennials include Hostas, Campanula carpatica, Dianthus, Ferns, Daylilies, Heucheras, and Nepeta; some of the possibilities for combinations of annuals include: Coleus, Vinca (non-trailing), Impatiens, white Zinnias, Nicotina, Artemisia, or Verbena.

Of course, you can always mix and match any combination of these to find an effect that is pleasing to all of your senses.

Pruning Tips and Tricks

If you decide to prune your Brugmansia instead of allowing it to grow naturally, you must wait until it begins to "Y." If you have purchased your plant, it may already have a "Y," but if you are growing yours from a cutting or seeds, you will have to be patient. The purpose of pruning a Brugmansia is to force it to grow more limbs, thereby forcing it to produce more flowers. The proper way to do this is to cut all but the newest growth off. Let it grow a bit and snip it here and there remembering to cut as close to the trunk as possible without cutting into the trunk. If you prefer a bushy tree, then you must prune a lateral branch. The cuts here need to be made at the joint, and each joint can produce up to two new branches.

If you prefer to get fancier with your Angel Trumpet, you can opt for a double or triple trunk tree. The easiest way to accomplish this is to twist or braid the two or three different trunks together, but you must start at an early age so that the trunks are soft and flexible. You will need to cut the leaves off the stems as you go and keep them tied with pantyhose as this will not cut into the stems. Using this method you can use one single colored plant, or two to three different colored plants.

The results can be very unique and varied. Remember there is nothing like having a unique plant that no one else has. You don't have to reveal your trade secrets either.

Last, but not least, you can also prune the roots of an Angel Trumpet without hurting the plant. The purpose of this is twofold, you can continue to enjoy your plant, without having to buy a new pot, and it will also stimulate new root and plant growth. A full grown Angel Trumpet will be perfectly content in a ten gallon pot as long as you keep the roots trimmed and occasionally replace the soil.

Propagation Techniques

Propagating your Angel Trumpet is both easy and rewarding. The seeds from these plants are slow to germinate, but they do have a high germination rate and grow fairly quickly. The trick to propagation with seeds is to keep them moist and be patient.

Cuttings are very easy to root. Just dip them in rooting hormone, put them in a good soil mix and water. Within a few weeks you will see new leaves develop which is a sure sign that your cutting is beginning to root.

Another option available if you have limited space is to save the seeds by placing a pantyhose or similar material over the seedpod and allowing it to open naturally. Once the seeds are dry, you should either freeze or refrigerate the seeds until you are ready to plant them.

The liquid inside the seedpod is extremely dangerous, and should not be touched with bare skin.

You can also take a cutting, dip it in rooting hormone, roll it in newspaper, and store it in a dark, dry space. Cuttings from these plants have been known to root up to two years after they have been stored in this way.

I believe you will find Angel Trumpets an easy and rewarding plant to grow.



Correct Fertilization of Brugmansia *translated to*

English by Dr. Rich Sanders

In the wild, Brugmansia are found in locations where the soil has been disturbed, such as areas in which vegetation has been uprooted by landslides. Most frequently, however, they appear in regions impacted by human activity, e.g. at the margins of agriculture, along roadsides or at dumps. In such places the soils are often rich in nutrients, especially nitrogen.

Brugmansia are nitrogen-loving plants. Not only do they tolerate high salt concentrations from fertilizers, but they prefer an abundance of nutrients when growing and flowering. In this regard, however, one must consider certain differences among the species and hybrids. *B. aurea* x *B. suaveolens* exhibits the strongest growth, often forming leaves to 24 inch (61 cm) length; accordingly they clearly need a higher supply of nutrient than *B. vulcanicola*, which ranks among at the slowest-growing Brugmansia.

Generally, one can recommend fertilizing Brugmansia in the following manner: A water-soluble, mineral and nitrogen-rich fertilizer (complete with micro nutrients) is particularly suitable. Such a fertilizer should contain approximately 12-20 % nitrogen, 3-6 % phosphorous and 8-12 % potassium. During the summer main growth period the plants should be fertilized twice a week. A solution of 4-6 g of water-soluble or 4-6 mL liquid fertilizer per liter of water per plant should be applied each time.

Fertilizer rates must be adjusted for the time of year, particularly for container plant culture. Before winter dormancy, in which the plants are to grow as little as possible, fertilizer amounts should be gradually reduced. During the winter Brugmansia should be fertilized sparingly. The dose is then raised slowly again at the beginning of spring.

Brugmansia that do not receive sufficient fertilizer exhibit slow growth, have light green leaves and produce few blooms. That the leaves have become a light green color becomes particularly evident after administration of a liquid fertilizer. After no more than three days from fertilization, the youngest leaves at the branch points become noticeably darker than the older leaves. On the basis of such changes in leaf color one can estimate the approximate nutritional condition of the plant. If the color difference remains very evident after several fertilizations, one should adopt shorter fertilization intervals. If a grower is uncertain about the success of a fertilization regime, or requires an exact nutrient profile, a plant sample or leaf should be submitted to an appropriate service or laboratory for analysis.

