



# Garden Clippings



*Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery Success Sheet No. 2*

## Heliotrope

Heliotropes are the perfect choice if you desire an easy-to-grow flowering plant. When grown outdoors as bedding plants, in containers or in window boxes, they can be used to attract butterflies. Indoors, their sweet-smelling fragrance will fill any room.

Heliotropes normally grow from 6 to 12 inches tall but up to 3 to 4 feet tall if grown as single-stemmed plants. During the summer months, they produce 4- to 6-inch flower heads comprising clusters of tiny tubular flowers. Flower colours range from lavender and purple to blue and white. Deep leaf venation makes the leaves very distinctive. bushy plant and promote reflowering.

### Propagation

Sow seeds in early spring, planting according to seed-package directions.

Take softwood cuttings in the early summer and semi-hardwood cuttings in late summer, using rooting hormone and a soilless medium. Please note that heliotropes are not frost hardy and must be brought indoors before the first frost for overwintering.

### Light

Heliotropes prefer bright sunlight. They will tolerate full sun, but shade them from direct summer sun, especially during the hottest parts of the day.

### Water and Fertilizer

Heliotropes prefer moist compost and an occasional misting. Reduce watering in the winter, keeping the compost slightly moist. When the plants flower, fertilize them every two weeks with a balanced fertilizer and once a month when not in flower.

### Temperature

Heliotropes grow best in average daytime temperatures of 20-24EC. and night-time temperatures of 10-15EC. During the winter months, temperatures of 5-10EC. are best.

### Soil Preference

Heliotropes prefer a soilless, well-drained potting mix in containers and a well-drained location outdoors.

### Reflowering

As heliotropes age, they produce fewer blooms. To encourage reflowering, prune back the branch tips. In the spring, cut back hard by removing half the growth to revive the older growth. These steps will help create a bush plant and promote reflowering.

### Pests

Sometimes whiteflies (small, white, moth-like insects) are found on the undersides of the leaves. They cause the leaves to pucker and yellow. Spraying with Safer's Soap and using yellow sticky strips are methods of control.

### Diseases

Another possible problem, rust, can be identified by the appearance of rusty-coloured circles on the undersides of leaves. The removal and disposal of infected leaves and better ventilation will help to control rust.

Leaf spot, another disease, is recognizable by brown, moist spots on the foliage. Remove and dispose of infected leaves, and spray with a systemic fungicide to control leaf spot. Also, keep the plant dry and do not mist it for several weeks.

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