

Did you know you can eat marigolds? Add the petals to salads to make them bright and colourful.

What you'll need:

- Packet of seeds
- Container, window box or hanging basket
- Multi-purpose compost

Why should you grow them?

Edible:

You can eat them! The petals really brighten up a salad. You can also use marigold petals as a natural yellow food colouring.

Attract pollinators:

Marigolds flower for a long time and are good for bees and butterflies.

Repel pests:

Marigolds help control tiny worms called 'nematodes' that can harm your crops. They also repel cabbage moths and whitefly.

MAGIC MARIGOLDS!

The earliest use of marigolds was by the ancient Aztecs. They thought marigolds had magical, religious and medicinal properties.

Marigolds are bright orange and yellow flowers – some look like daisies and some look like pom-poms. There are French marigolds, African Marigolds and 'Pot marigolds' (not really a marigold, but a plant called 'Calendula').

Popular marigold varieties

French Marigolds:

Marigold 'Boy O' Boy Orange'

Marigold 'Mr Majestic'

African Marigolds:

Marigold 'Discovery Yellow'

Marigold 'Sunspot Mixed'

Pot Marigolds (Calendula):

Calendula 'Citrus Cocktail'

Calendula 'Sherbet Fizz'



Marigolds are a good 'companion' plant
Photo credit: Arjuna Kodisinghe, Shutterstock



Marigolds grow well in window boxes.
Photo credit: Paulay, Shutterstock



Pot marigolds grow to 25-45cm tall.
Photo credit: mcajan, Shutterstock

Step 1: Choose where to plant them

- Marigolds aren't fussy, but like a warm sunny spot.
- Grow marigolds near vegetables to keep pests away!
- If you're growing in the ground, remove any weeds and mix in some compost.
- If you're growing in containers, fill them with compost.

Step 2: Sow your seeds

- If you sow seeds from March to May, they'll flower from summer to autumn.
- Sprinkle the seeds on the ground or in containers.
- Cover with a thin layer of soil or compost.
- Gently water.
- Your plants will start growing in 1-2 weeks.
- They should be fully grown in 7-11 weeks.

Step 3: Care for your marigolds

- If your plants are crowded when they start to grow, thin them out to about 30cm apart.
- Water your plants and keep the soil moist.
- Once they get going, marigolds will continue growing easily, even if you forget about them.
- 'Deadheading' - removing dead flowers - will keep them blooming longer.
- Protect your marigolds from frost - they don't like the cold.