

Calendula officinalis: Calendula, Pot Marigold¹

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This Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ publication is part of a series originally written by Edward F. Gilman. Visit <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/> to learn more about creating and maintaining attractive landscapes that protect Florida's water resources and environment.

Introduction

Pot marigold is an herbaceous cool-season annual in the daisy (*Asteraceae*) family, which is native to regions of Europe and the Mediterranean. This plant has a round growth form and may reach a height and spread up to 2 feet (Figure 1). Leaves are fragrant and vary in shape between lanceolate and obovate (Figure 2). Flowers are single or double and may be red, orange, or yellow (Figure 3). In USDA hardiness zones 9B, 10, and 11, pot marigold is generally planted in the fall for winter and spring color. This plant is well suited for containers or above-ground planters, adds dramatic color when planted en masse, may be used as cut flowers, or has culinary uses (flowers are edible when not sprayed by pesticides). This plant has been noted to be a natural herbivore and pest repellent.



Figure 2. Leaf—*Calendula officinalis*: pot marigold. Credit: © Alexander Baransky, some rights reserved (CC BY-NC) via iNaturalist



Figure 1. Full form—*Calendula officinalis*: pot marigold. Credit: © sunny1az, some rights reserved (CC BY-NC) via iNaturalist



Figure 3. Flower—*Calendula officinalis*: pot marigold. Credit: © Mandie Quark, some rights reserved (CC BY-NC) via iNaturalist

General Information

Scientific name: *Calendula officinalis*

Pronunciation: kuh-LEND-yoo-luh off-fiss-in-AY-liss

Common name(s): Calendula, pot marigold, English marigold, Scotch marigold

Family: *Asteraceae*

Plant type: herbaceous, annual

USDA hardiness zones: all zones (Figures 4 and 5)

USDA Hardiness Zones 3B-11A

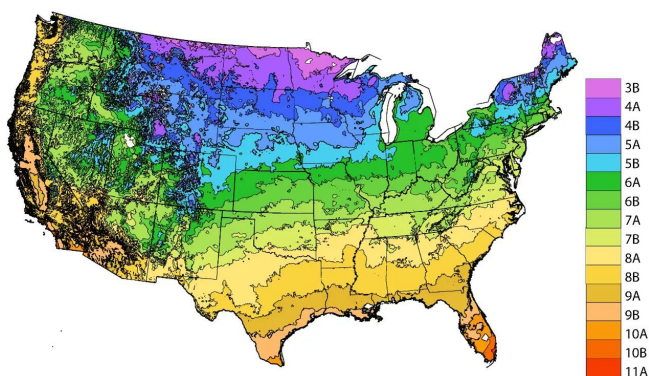


Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting zone—USDA Hardiness Zones 3B–11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured on map. Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/> for specific zone information.

USDA Hardiness Zones 7B-11A

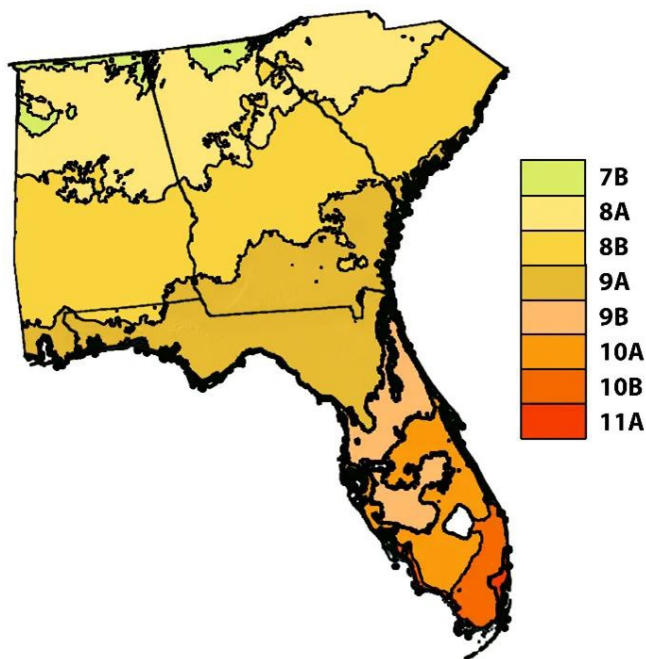


Figure 5. Shaded area represents potential planting zone in the SE Region—USDA Hardiness Zones 7B–11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured. Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/> for specific zone information.

Planting month for zone 7: May

Planting month for zone 8: Mar; Apr; Sep; Oct

Planting month for zone 9: Nov; Dec; Jan; Feb; Mar

Planting month for zones 10 and 11: Dec; Jan; Feb

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; mass planting; cut flowers; attracts butterflies; culinary (when properly handled and no pesticides have been applied)

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 1 to 2 feet

Spread: 1 to 2 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: ovate; obovate; lanceolate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: not applicable, fragrant

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: not applicable

Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: yellow; orange; red

Flower characteristic: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular

Fruit length: less than 1 inch

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; clay; sand; loam

Drought tolerance: low to moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 6 to 12 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: not applicable

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Pot marigold produces the best blooms when located in full sun. It may also tolerate some partial shade in warmer growing conditions; however, bloom frequency may decrease. This plant is highly adaptable to a range of soil conditions, given that the planting site is well drained. Pot marigold may exhibit moderate drought tolerance once established; however, it may require additional irrigation in drought conditions. In USDA hardiness zones 9B and below, this plant is generally planted during the fall to add winter and spring color to the landscape. Pot marigold is generally not a warm-season plant but may be cut back in the spring to encourage fall regrowth. Pinching this plant back at a node creates a fuller growth form, and removing spent flowers will encourage the plant to produce new blooms. Several cultivars are available but are less common than the species. They include variations in flower color; flower size; and petal structure, including single and double varieties.

Pot marigold is an annual that may be used in a variety of ways including in a container or above-ground planter, in mass plantings, as cut flowers, in pollinator gardens, as borders in walkways, or as accents in the landscape. Pot marigold is resistant to browsing by deer and rabbits.

Design Considerations

Pot marigold is a fantastic cool-season annual that delivers cheerful color through fall, winter, and spring, and offers edible petals for culinary use (when handled properly and not treated with pesticides). With a low mounding habit pot marigold can be used in mass plantings to create a bold, eye-catching groundcover. Spaced 12–18 inches apart, it is particularly effective under a small tree, and it also works beautifully as a cheerful border along walkways and in containers. For companion planting, pair pot marigold with other cool-season annuals that need sun and good drainage. Its warm oranges and yellows contrast beautifully with the purples and blues of pansies (*Viola x wittrockiana*), violas (*Viola* spp.), and petunias (*Petunia x atkinsiana*); dusty miller (*Jacobaea maritima*) adds silvery texture; snapdragons (*Antirrhinum majus*) provide vertical spikes. In vegetable beds, it complements leafy greens like kale and Swiss chard.

Pot marigolds are usually planted in a container or 12–18 inches apart in a mass planting. Their bright colors draw attention to an area. They look nice as an annual groundcover in an open bed or beneath a small tree. A tree with dark bark contrasts nicely with a mass planting of pot marigold.

Pests and Diseases

Pest issues include snails, whitefly, and aphids. Disease issues include powdery mildew and cucumber mosaic virus. Proper spacing and cultural conditions encourage plant health.

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