

# *Celosia argentea*: Cockscomb, Plumed Cockscomb, Celosia<sup>1</sup>

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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

*Celosia* (*Celosia argentea*), also commonly referred to as plumed cockscomb, is an herbaceous annual that is notable for its brightly colored and whimsical-looking terminal inflorescences. This plant has an upright growth habit and reaches a height of up to 2 feet and spread of 1 foot (Figure 1). Leaves are 1 to 3 inches long, and may be green, purple, or red depending on cultivar selection (Figure 2). The flowers are a terminal inflorescence and have various shapes depending on the cultivar group and may be yellow, orange, pink, purple, or red. Plants in the Childsii Group have a globose shaped inflorescence with numerous folds in the flower structure (Figure 3). Plants in the Cristata Group have a flattened flower structure with infoldings on the margins (Figure 4). Flowers of the Plumosa Group are feather-like in their structure (Figure 5). The Spicata Group has flowers which are singular and thinly shaped (Figure 6).



Figure 2. Leaf—*Celosia argentea*: Celosia.  
Credit: Ryan Fessenden



Figure 1. Full form—*Celosia argentea*: Celosia.  
Credit: NtDanai via Adobe Stock

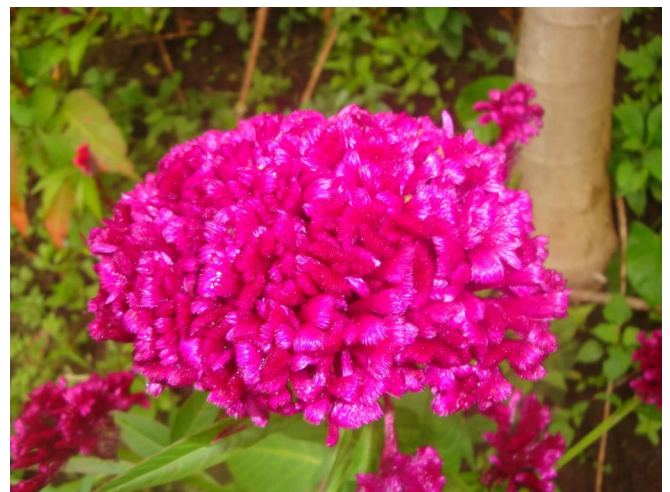


Figure 3. Flower—*Celosia argentea*: Celosia, Childsii Group.  
Credit: © mojarranica, some rights reserved (CC BY-NC) via iNaturalist



Figure 4. Flower—*Celosia argentea*: Celosia, Cristata Group.

Credit: © reginaesparza, some rights reserved (CC BY-NC) via iNaturalist



Figure 5. Flower—*Celosia argentea*: Celosia, Plumosa Group.

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Figure 6. Flower—*Celosia argentea*: Celosia, Spicata Group.

Credit: Ryan Fessenden

*Celosia* is well suited for a variety of uses in the landscape. It may be used as a border or edging in a landscape bed, used in container planters, makes a bold and colorful statement in mass plantings, may be used as dried cut flowers, and is attractive to pollinators. The young leaves and stems, as well as the flower buds of many varieties of this plant, are edible. Care should be taken to avoid eating any plants that may have been treated with chemicals.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Celosia argentea*

**Previous name(s):** *Celosia plumosa*, *Celosia spicata*, *Celosia cristata*

**Pronunciation:** see-LOE-see-uh ar-gent-TEA-ah

**Common name(s):** celosia, cockscomb, plumed cockscomb

**Family:** *Amaranthaceae*

**Plant type:** annual

**USDA hardiness zones:** all zones (Figures 7 and 8)

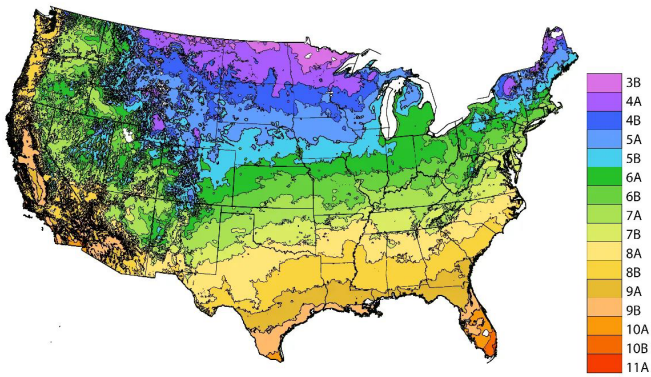


Figure 7. Shaded area represents potential planting zone—USDA Hardiness Zones 3B-11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured on map.

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

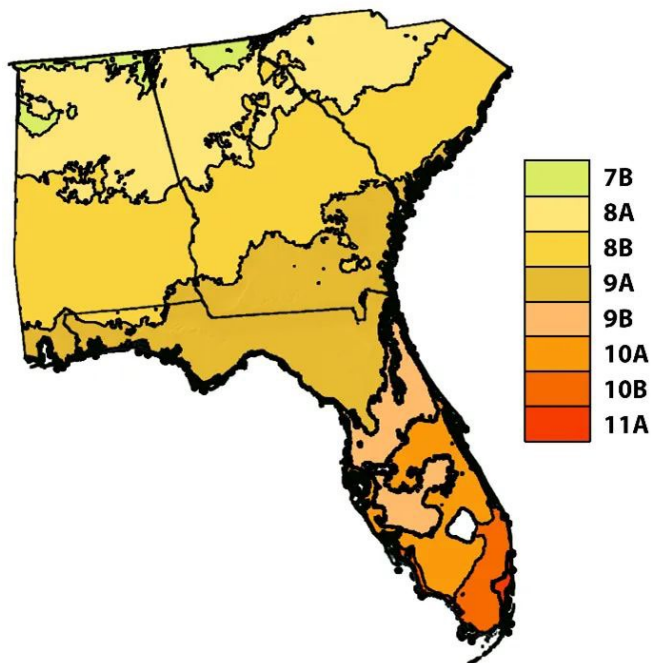


Figure 8. Shaded area represents potential planting zone in the SE Region—USDA Hardiness Zones 7B-11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured on map.

Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/> for specific zone information.

**Planting month for zone 7:** Jun; Jul

**Planting month for zone 8:** May; Jun; Jul

**Planting month for zone 9:** Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct

**Planting month for zones 10 and 11:** Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct; Nov

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Invasive potential:** may self-seed each year; not known to be invasive

**Uses:** edging; mass planting; container or above-ground planter; dried cut flowers; attracts pollinators

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

## Description

**Height:** 6 inches to 2 feet

**Spread:** 6 inches to 1 foot

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** fine

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** linear; oblong

**Leaf venation:** bowed

**Leaf type and persistence:** not applicable

**Leaf blade length:** 3 to 6 inches

**Leaf color:** purple; red; green

**Fall color:** not applicable

**Fall characteristic:** not applicable

## Flower

**Flower color:** yellow; pink; purple; orange; red

**Flower characteristic:** showy

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** capsule

**Fruit length:** less than 1 inch

**Fruit cover:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** black

**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; sand; loam; clay

**Drought tolerances:** moderate once established

**Soil salt tolerances:** moderate in certain cultivars

**Plant spacing:** 6 to 12 inches

## Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** not applicable

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

## Use and Management

Celosia should be planted in a full-sun location but will tolerate some shade. This plant is adaptable to soil conditions; however, high organic matter will increase plant vigor. Ensure young plants are not exposed to cold temperatures as this will cause premature blooming and disrupt the bloom cycle. To encourage fuller flowering and production of multiple inflorescences, pinch the first flower back when it first forms on the plumed and crested group cultivars. Celosia is very easy to grow and thrives in the heat.

Propagation is by seed. The heads may be larger if the seed is planted directly into the garden. If started indoors they germinate in one week at 70°F to 75°F. Plant indoors six weeks before the desired outdoor planting date. Seedlings should be grown warm and on the dry side.

## Design Considerations

Cockscomb offers bold, season-long color in electric reds, oranges, golds, and magentas. Its unique, sculptural forms—crested "brains," feathery plumes, or wheat-like spikes—provide dramatic shape and a rich texture to the landscape.

Full sun and well-drained soil are essential. Use it as a vertical "exclamation point" in borders, massed together for a uniform block of texture, or as a "thriller" in containers. The flowers also dry exceptionally well, making them a classic choice for cutting gardens.

To create contrast, pair its bold, upright form with softer companions like cosmos, ornamental grasses, or zinnias. For a dramatic palette, combine it with deep-purple or chartreuse sweet potato vine, or the plum-burgundy foliage of the dwarf 'Ruby' loropetalum.

## Pests and Diseases

Pest issues include occasional mite damage and aphids. Minor disease issues include leaf spot.

<sup>1</sup> This document is FPS114, one of a series of the Department of Environmental Horticulture, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date October 1999. Revised March 2023 and April 2026. Visit the Ask IFAS website at <https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/> for the currently supported version of this publication. *To learn more about creating and maintaining attractive landscapes that protect Florida's water and natural resources, visit [ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/](http://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/).*

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