

## Marigold

Tagetes patula

Marigolds are an annual flower that like full sun and will bloom for a long period. They will brighten any garden and can be used as an edging along garden beds or in pots. Marigolds have long been believed to be a helpful addition to the organic garden as they have a role in suppressing soil diseases. This can be achieved by interplanting susceptible crops such as tomatoes with marigolds. They like a moderately well drained fertile soil with some slow release fertilizer at planting, but do not over fertilize. Sow seeds directly into the warm spring soil. You'll see fast results as germination is rapid. Blooms should appear within weeks of sowing. You can pinch the tops off to encourage a bushier plant and more flowers.

Recommendations:

- To easily identify your seedlings, label your stake.
- Plant with your tomato seeds to help suppress soil diseases.
- Allow the soil to become dry between watering as excess water on leaves can lead to powdery mildew.
- Avoid over fertilizing.

To save your seed:

The best time to harvest your seeds is when the petals are brown and dried out and the base (the seed pod) is turning brown. You can harvest the seeds while there is still a little green left on the base. Remove the flower head from the stem and the base. Marigold seeds are long, slender, sharp, and pointy, dark-coloured on one end and light-coloured on the other. Pull them away from the base and let them dry separated on some paper towel for 1 week. Store in a sealed container in a cool and dry place.

Remember to label your seeds with the name and date of when they were collected.