

French Marigold

Sowing Indoors (to get a head start):

- For best results use sterile, disease free and weed free soil to start your seedlings.
- Sow indoors for surest results, 0.5cm deep, in trays of seed starter soil.
- Water well and place in a warm position.
- A temperature of 15-20°C is ideal. Keep moist.
- Seedlings usually appear in 14-21 days.
- Transplant them, 5cm apart, to other trays when large enough to handle.
- Grow on in cooler, but not cold conditions.
- Gradually accustom young plants to outside conditions (avoid frosts), before planting out into well-drained soil, 20 cm apart.

Sowing Outdoors:

- For best results use sterile, disease free and weed free soil to start your seedlings.
- Or, sow thinly, outdoors for ease, where they are to flower, 1.5cm deep, directly into finely-prepared, well-drained soil, which has already been watered.
- Thin seedlings as required.
- Water well until plants are established.

Transplanting in the Garden:

- For best results use sterile, disease free and weed free soil to start your seedlings.
- It is best to transplant in the early evening or cooler day – hot temperatures are likely to upset the seedling.
- Dig a hole that is the same depth as your seedling and approximately twice as wide.
- Space seedlings approximately 20 cm apart.
- Place your seedling into the hole, bring the soil closer and be sure not to plant the seedlings deeper than the root ball – the top of the root ball should be at the same level as your hole.
- Always give your seedlings a slight water after transplanting to remove air bubbles and settle your seedlings into their forever home.

Growing Tips

- Remove dead heads to prolong flowering. Grow some plants in pots then pull out to fill gaps in borders
- Grown as companion plants to tomatoes, marigolds are said to deter whitefly attack.
- Keep weeds under control during the growing season.
- Weeds compete with plants for water, space and nutrients, so control them by either cultivating often or use a mulch to prevent their seeds from germinating.
- Mulches also help retain soil moisture and maintain even soil temperatures.
- This is especially important for tomatoes as their roots may be easily damaged when weeding, and this can lead to blossom end rot.
- Keep plants well-watered during the growing season, especially during dry spells.
- Plants need about 2cm to 5cm of rain per week during the growing season.
- Use a rain gauge to check to see if you need to add water.
- It's best to water with a drip or trickle system that delivers water at low pressure at the soil level.

- If you water with overhead sprinklers, water early in the day so the foliage has time to dry off before evening, to minimise disease problems.
- Keep the soil moist but not saturated.
- Monitor for pests and diseases.
- Check with your local Garden Centre for pest controls recommended for your area.