

How to Grow and Care for African Marigolds

African Marigold Flower Care

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Caring for African Marigolds requires little work since these summer annuals practically care for themselves. Gardeners looking to add African marigolds to their landscapes should be aware that growers often nickname them “tall” marigolds and thus may depict them as such on pot tags.

African marigolds are fast growing leafy plants that produce golden flora tops. Leaves rather resemble ferns in coloring and similar growth patterns. In addition to the powerful aroma given off by African marigold flowers, strong scents often emanate from leaves as well. Plant range is wide extending from the smaller twelve *inches* to gigantic four footers.

African marigold flower colors range from light yellow to orange. Of course, some African marigold plants produce gold flora – hence the name Marigold. At the same time, however some African marigold flora is maroon. Flower blooming period can last from the beginning of summer all the way until initial frost. Hotter climates, such as deserts, may experience shorter blooming periods – from autumn till frost.

African marigolds make great cut flowers that last a long time in vases of water. Growing tips are listed below.

- African marigolds love full sun but may prosper in part sun as well.
- African marigolds sow easily from seeds when planted in warm soil. Gardeners may expect sprouts to appear in only a few days. All the same, however, gardeners

seeking faster starts should sow seeds in flats or boxes prior to planting season.

- Whether sowing seeds, transplanting store bought plants, or transplanting plants grown in flats or boxes, prepare soil by loosening and adding compost or mulch. Although African marigolds do not act too fussy about soil consistencies, all plants prosper better under healthy soil conditions.
- Set plant bases so that they mesh with the surface of garden soil and space about six inches apart. When planting taller plants, hole depths may be increased to strengthen plant stems as explained below.
- Water plants frequently especially when freshly planted and on hot summer days.
- African marigold flower-lets—as is the case with marigolds in general—tend to hold excess water when rained on, sprinkled, or sprayed with hoses. The excess water causes the heavy heads to droop which results in bending the stems. Whenever possible, growers should avoid wetting the flower heads to prevent stems from bending and possibly breaking. This concern usually only applies to taller growing African marigold plants, however, thus gardeners growing lower height plants should not be alarmed.
- Support taller African marigolds by removing one to three inches of lower leaves and embedding plants an equal distance below ground surface. Supporting tall African marigolds using this method often removes the need for staking the plants. Gardeners preferring to stake plants to support them should feel free to do so.
- After plants are set the most gardeners should do in the way of caring for African Marigolds is—

(1) Spread mulch around plant bases to minimize water loss

(2) Promote extended blooming period by removing spent blossoms

(3) Remove weeds that find their way through added mulch

Once African marigolds are set, gardeners can sit back and watch their flowers bloom. Since African marigolds tend to grow several flower heads on each stem, a well-planted garden should produce flowers aplenty.