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for a healthier world*

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**Database Name:**

## Calendula officinalis - L.

**Keyword:**

### Pot Marigold

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Author	L.	Botanical references	200
Family	<a href="#">Compositae</a>	Genus	<a href="#">Calendula</a>
Synonyms			
Known Hazards	None known		
Range	S. Europe. A garden escape in Britain[17].		
Habitat	The original habitat is obscure but it is found as a garden escape on waste, cultivated and arable land and along roadsides[200].		
Edibility Rating	 (1-5)	Medicinal Rating	 (1-5)

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### Physical Characteristics



Annual growing to 0.6m by 0.5m.

It is hardy to zone 6 and is not frost tender. It is in flower from June to November, and the seeds ripen from August to November. The flowers are monoecious (individual flowers are either male or female, but both sexes can be found on the same plant) and are pollinated by Bees. It is noted for attracting wildlife.

The plant prefers light (sandy), medium (loamy) and heavy (clay) soils, requires well-drained soil and can grow in nutritionally poor soil. The plant prefers acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils and can grow in very acid and very alkaline soils. It can grow in semi-shade (light woodland) or no shade. It requires moist soil.

### Habitats

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Cultivated Beds;

## Edible Uses

Edible Parts: [Flowers](#); [Leaves](#).

Edible Uses: [Colouring](#); [Tea](#).

Leaves - raw[14, 21]. When eaten they first of all impart a viscid sweetness, followed by a strong penetrating taste of a saline nature [4]. They are very rich in vitamins and minerals and are similar to *Taraxacum officinale* (Dandelion) in nutritional value[179]. Fresh petals are chopped and added to salads[183]. The dried petals have a more concentrated flavour and are used as a seasoning in soups, cakes etc[183]. High in vitamins A and C[218]. An edible yellow dye is obtained from the petals[46]. A saffron substitute[21], it is used to colour and flavour rice, soups etc[2, 14, 27, 33]. It is also used as a hair rinse, adding golden tints to brown or auburn hair[201]. A tea is made from the petals and flowers, that made from the petals is less bitter[183]. There is no record of the seed being edible, but it contains up to 37% protein and 46% oil[218].

## Medicinal Uses

[Antiphlogistic](#); [Antiseptic](#); [Antispasmodic](#); [Aperient](#); [Astringent](#); [Cholagogue](#); [Diaphoretic](#); [Emmenagogue](#); [Homeopathy](#); [Skin](#); [Stimulant](#); [Vulnerary](#); [Warts](#).

Pot marigold is one of the best known and versatile herbs in Western herbal medicine and is also a popular domestic remedy[4, 254]. It is, above all, a remedy for skin problems and is applied externally to bites and stings, sprains, wounds, sore eyes, varicose veins etc[4, 254]. It is also a cleansing and detoxifying herb and is taken internally in treating fevers and chronic infections[4, 254]. Only the common deep-orange flowered variety is considered to be of medicinal value[4]. The whole plant, but especially the flowers and the leaves, is antiphlogistic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, aperient, astringent, cholagogue, diaphoretic, emmenagogue, skin, stimulant and vulnerary[4, 7, 9, 21, 46, 165, 201]. The leaves can be used fresh or dried, they are best harvested in the morning of a fine sunny day just after the dew has dried from them[4]. The flowers are also used fresh or dried, for drying they are harvested when fully open and need to be dried quickly in the shade[4]. A tea of the petals tones up the circulation and, taken regularly, can ease varicose veins [201]. An application of the crushed stems to corns and warts will soon render them easily removable[7]. The leaves, blossoms and buds are used to make a homeopathic remedy[232]. It is used internally in order to speed the healing of wounds[232].

## Other Uses

[Compost](#); [Cosmetic](#); [Dye](#); [Essential](#); [Repellent](#); [Weather forecasting](#).

The growing plant acts as an insect deterrent[14], it reduces the soil

eelworm population[24]. The flowers are used cosmetically. They can be used in skin lotions and when added to hair shampoos will lighten the hair colour[244]. The flowers are an alternative ingredient of 'Quick Return' compost activator[32]. This is a dried and powdered mixture of several herbs that can be added to a compost heap in order to speed up bacterial activity and thus shorten the time needed to make the compost[K]. A yellow dye is obtained from the boiled flowers[2, 4, 46]. An essential oil is obtained from the plant[7]. It is used rather sparingly, in view of the difficulty in obtaining it, in perfumes that have a rather sharp tang[7]. The flowers close when wet weather is likely to occur and they can therefore be used as a rough means of weather forecasting[7].

## Scented Plants

### **Plant: Crushed**

All parts of the plant are pungently scented.

## Cultivation details

An easily grown plant, it succeeds in any well-drained soil[200, 268], though it prefers a good loam and requires a sunny or at least partially sunny position[4, 15, 200, 268]. Plants flower best when they are grown in a poor soil[108]. Tolerates a pH in the range 4.5 to 8.3. The pot marigold is a very ornamental plant that is commonly grown in the flower garden, and occasionally as a culinary herb, there are some named varieties[183]. When well-sited it usually self-sows freely and will maintain itself if allowed[1, 4]. The flowers are sensitive to variations in temperature and dampness, closing when it is dark and when rain is expected[7, 244]. All parts of the plant are pungently scented[245]. The growing plant attracts hoverflies to the garden, the young of which are fairly efficient eaters of aphids[24, 201]. The flowers are attractive to bees[108]. Marigolds are good companion plants, they grow well with tomatoes[14]. Cucumber mosaic disease and powdery mildew can cause problems with this plant[188].

## Propagation

Seed - sow in situ from spring to early summer and again in September. The seed germinates best in darkness and usually within 1 - 2 weeks at 21°C[138]. The plant often self-sows freely.

## Cultivars

No entries have been made for this species as yet.

## Links

## References

[K] **Ken Fern**

Notes from observations, tasting etc at Plants For A Future and on field trips.

[1] **F. Chittendon.** *RHS Dictionary of Plants plus Supplement.* 1956 Oxford University Press 1951

Comprehensive listing of species and how to grow them. Somewhat outdated, it has been replaced in 1992 by a new dictionary (see [200]).

[2] **Hedrick. U. P.** *Sturtevant's Edible Plants of the World.* Dover Publications 1972 ISBN 0-486-20459-6

Lots of entries, quite a lot of information in most entries and references.

[4] **Grieve.** *A Modern Herbal.* Penguin 1984 ISBN 0-14-046-440-9 Not so modern (1930's?) but lots of information, mainly temperate plants.

[7] **Chiej. R.** *Encyclopaedia of Medicinal Plants.* MacDonald 1984 ISBN 0-356-10541-5

Covers plants growing in Europe. Also gives other interesting information on the plants. Good photographs.

[9] **Launert. E.** *Edible and Medicinal Plants.* Hamlyn 1981 ISBN 0-600-37216-2

Covers plants in Europe. a drawing of each plant, quite a bit of interesting information.

[14] **Holtom. J. and Hylton. W.** *Complete Guide to Herbs.* Rodale Press 1979 ISBN 0-87857-262-7

A good herbal.

[15] **Bryan. J. and Castle. C.** *Edible Ornamental Garden.* Pitman Publishing 1976 ISBN 0-273-00098-5

A small book with interesting ideas for edible plants in the ornamental garden.

[17] **Clapham, Tutin and Warburg.** *Flora of the British Isles.* Cambridge University Press 1962

A very comprehensive flora, the standard reference book but it has no pictures.

[21] **Lust. J.** *The Herb Book.* Bantam books 1983 ISBN 0-553-23827-2

Lots of information tightly crammed into a fairly small book.

[24] **Baines. C.** *Making a Wildlife Garden.* 0

Fairly good with lots of ideas about creating wildlife areas in the garden.

[27] **Vilmorin. A.** *The Vegetable Garden.* Ten Speed Press 0 ISBN 0-89815-041-8

A reprint of a nineteenth century classic, giving details of vegetable varieties. Not really that informative though.

[32] **Bruce. M. E.** *Commonsense Compost Making*. Faber 1977 ISBN 0-571-09990-4

Excellent little booklet dealing with how to make compost by using herbs to activate the heap. Gives full details of the herbs that are used.

[33] **Organ. J.** *Rare Vegetables for Garden and Table*. Faber 1960  
Unusual vegetables that can be grown outdoors in Britain. A good guide.

[46] **Uphof. J. C. Th.** *Dictionary of Economic Plants*. Weinheim 1959  
An excellent and very comprehensive guide but it only gives very short descriptions of the uses without any details of how to utilize the plants. Not for the casual reader.

[108] **International Bee Research Association.** *Garden Plants Valuable to Bees*. International Bee Research Association. 1981  
The title says it all.

[138] **Bird. R. (Editor)** *Growing from Seed. Volume 3*. Thompson and Morgan. 1989  
Very readable magazine with lots of information on propagation.

[165] **Mills. S. Y.** *The Dictionary of Modern Herbalism*. 0  
An excellent small herbal.

[179] **Reid. B. E.** *Famine Foods of the Chiu-Huang Pen-ts'ao*. Taipei. Southern Materials Centre 1977  
A translation of an ancient Chinese book on edible wild foods. Fascinating.

[183] **Facciola. S.** *Cornucopia - A Source Book of Edible Plants*. Kampong Publications 1990 ISBN 0-9628087-0-9  
Excellent. Contains a very wide range of conventional and unconventional food plants (including tropical) and where they can be obtained (mainly N. American nurseries but also research institutes and a lot of other nurseries from around the world.

[188] **Brickell. C.** *The RHS Gardener's Encyclopedia of Plants and Flowers* Dorling Kindersley Publishers Ltd. 1990 ISBN 0-86318-386-7  
Excellent range of photographs, some cultivation details but very little information on plant uses.

[200] **Huxley. A.** *The New RHS Dictionary of Gardening*. 1992. MacMillan Press 1992 ISBN 0-333-47494-5  
Excellent and very comprehensive, though it contains a number of silly mistakes. Readable yet also very detailed.

[201] **Allardice.P.** *A - Z of Companion Planting*. Cassell Publishers Ltd. 1993 ISBN 0-304-34324-2  
A well produced and very readable book.

[218] **Duke. J. A. and Ayensu. E. S.** *Medicinal Plants of China* Reference Publications, Inc. 1985 ISBN 0-917256-20-4  
Details of over 1,200 medicinal plants of China and brief details of

their uses. Often includes an analysis, or at least a list of constituents. Heavy going if you are not into the subject.

[232] **Castro. M.** *The Complete Homeopathy Handbook*. Macmillan. London. 1990 ISBN 0-333-55581-3

A concise beginner's guide to the subject. Very readable.

[244] **Phillips. R. & Foy. N.** *Herbs* Pan Books Ltd. London. 1990 ISBN 0-330-30725-8

Deals with all types of herbs including medicinal, culinary, scented and dye plants. Excellent photographs with quite good information on each plant.

[245] **Genders. R.** *Scented Flora of the World*. Robert Hale. London. 1994 ISBN 0-7090-5440-8

An excellent, comprehensive book on scented plants giving a few other plant uses and brief cultivation details. There are no illustrations.

[254] **Chevallier. A.** *The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants* Dorling Kindersley. London 1996 ISBN 9-780751-303148

An excellent guide to over 500 of the more well known medicinal herbs from around the world.

[268] **Stuart. M. (Editor)** *The Encyclopedia of Herbs and Herbalism* Orbis Publishing. London. 1979 ISBN 0-85613-067-2

Excellent herbal with good concise information on over 400 herbs.

## Readers Comments

### Calendula officinalis

Fri May 19 2006

"Clapham, Tootin and Warburg" should read "Clapham, Tutin and Warburg", although I can see where the South London confusion might come in. Your spelling of "swearing" is also idiosyncratic. A useful site, though. I feast on calendula tonight.

### Calendula officinalis

**Kathy Stevens** Wed Dec 6 2006

Calendula incorporated into an oil or gel is very ANTI-INFLAMMATORY on the skin and it explains the QUICK HEALING properties, esp. for feet of a diabetic when speed of healing is critical.

### Calendula officinalis

**Anni Dixon** Thu Jul 26 2007

Anni Dixon. I used calendula tea as a mouthwash after deep and

violent surgery to remove bone infection from upper and lower jaws of the mouth. It greatly assisted healing without infection. I was also interested to read somewhere (can't remember where now) that it is one of the few remedies for bone infection, when taken as a tea, which even antibiotics are unable to deal with because bone infection tends to lack a viable blood supply and therefore supply of oxygen. I have also found this tea used as a lotion for bathing the only thing to give relief to severely broken and dis-integrated skin during bad attacks of eczema on the hands.

[help yourself to health](#) Information resource on chronic illness and environmental toxins

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