



GARDENING MAINTANCE TIPS FOR PLANTING & GROWING MARIGOLDS

Planting and growing marigolds in your Southern California garden can bring vibrant colors and a cheerful atmosphere. Here are some care and maintenance tips to ensure your marigolds thrive:

- 1. Choosing the Right Time:** In Southern California, you can plant marigold seeds or seedlings in the spring after the last frost, or in the fall for winter blooms in milder areas.
- 2. Selecting the Right Spot:** Choose a location that receives full sun, as marigolds need at least 6 hours of direct sunlight each day.
- 3. Soil Preparation:** Marigolds are not picky about soil, but they do best in well-draining soil. Amend heavy clay soil with compost or sand to improve drainage.
- 4. Planting:** For seeds, plant them about 1 inch apart and 1 inch deep. For seedlings, space them 8-10 inches apart to allow for growth. Water thoroughly after planting.
- 5. Watering:** Water your marigolds at the base to keep the foliage dry and prevent disease. Allow the soil to dry out slightly between waterings. In the dry climate of Southern California, a deep watering once a week should suffice.
- 6. Fertilizing:** Marigolds are light feeders, so avoid over-fertilizing. If needed, apply a balanced, slow-release fertilizer at planting time.
- 7. Deadheading:** Regularly remove spent flowers (deadheading) to encourage more blooms and extend the flowering season.
- 8. Pruning:** Pinch back young plants to encourage bushy growth. This will result in a fuller plant with more flowers.
- 9. Pest and Disease Control:** Marigolds are relatively pest-resistant but keep an eye out for aphids and spider mites. Treat any infestations with insecticidal soap or neem oil. Good air circulation and avoiding wet foliage can help prevent fungal diseases.
- 10. Mulching:** In the hot Southern California sun, mulch around the base of your marigolds to help retain soil moisture and keep the roots cool.

By following these tips, your marigolds will add a beautiful and low-maintenance burst of color to your Southern California garden.