



Virginia Green Industry Council

A Real Show Off

For Immediate Use

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Electronic Version:

www.viriniagreen.org

Few garden annuals are more popular and showy than marigolds, according to Lin Diacont of the Virginia Green Council. It's the top choice of many North American gardeners for its wide variety of sizes and colors, ranging from deep orange and gold to lemon yellow and white.

Legend has it that marigold seed was taken to Europe by the explorer Cortez from Mexico. From Europe, its popularity spread to Africa and India, then finally returned to North America. Three types are now commonly grown: American (formerly known as African), French and Signet

American marigolds are bushy plants, 21/2 to 31/2 feet tall, with blooms ranging from 2 to 5 inches in diameter. These cultivars are best when used for background plantings and cut flowers. The French varieties are low-growing, reaching a height of 6 to 12 inches with one to two inch blooms. They are ideal for window boxes, low borders and pots. The compact plants of the Signet types are 7 to 10 inches tall with fine, delicate, fern-like foliage topped by small, single yellow or yellow-orange flowers. They are useful as showy border plants.

Home gardeners will find this bedding plant extremely easy to grow. Spring planting outdoors should be delayed until the soil is warm and dry enough to prepare -- normally late April or early May. Choose a spot that receives a great deal of sun. For best results, early flowers and top quality, transplant bedding plants purchased from a reputable garden center.

Many experts agree that it is best to transplant in the evening. Before setting plants in the garden, prepare the holes; then invert the pot or plastic pack. Gently remove the transplant and its root ball. The less the root ball is disturbed, the better. Soak the bed after transplanting and water thoroughly whenever the soil becomes dry. Plant the dwarf varieties at least 6 to 12 inches apart; the taller varieties can be planted every 12 to 18 inches.

Marigolds require very little care or maintenance. Dwarf varieties tend to go to seed if faded flowers remain on the plant. So pick off the dead blooms regularly. The taller, American varieties will branch better if the first flower bud that develops in the center of the plant is pitched off when the plant is small.

Marigolds in the garden add a warm, vibrant touch of color in a great variety of shapes and sizes.

Go to our consumer website for additional gardening information at www.VirginiaGardening.com

The Virginia Green Industry Council is the voice of the horticulture industry in the Commonwealth and is dedicated to enhancing the beauty of the state's environment, the well-being of our citizens, improving our state's economy, and improving the health and wellness for everyone in Virginia. The Council is made up of providers and consumers of horticultural products and services. The Council works to provide public and industry education, environmental guidelines and other information that will keep Virginia green and growing. For more information, visit www.viriniagreen.org. 540-382-0943 FAX: 540-382-2716

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