

Healing Garden Herb Guides

Calendula

Botanical Name *Calendula officinalis* L
Family: Compositae

What is it?



Calendula is otherwise known as pot marigold, though this is not to be confused with other ornamental marigolds in the garden. It is native to Southern Europe, and now widely cultivated around the world. It is an herbaceous perennial plant that can grow up to a metre in height. The leaves are a dark green, hairy and toothed and its flowers are a characteristic bright yellow or orange forming a thick flower head that can reach 7cm in diameter.

How can I grow it?

It grows very easily in many different habitats though prefers full sun. It is good in pots and containers as well as making a great bedding plant and is easily grown from seed.

How can I use it?

- **Eating**

The name 'pot marigold' refers to the use of the flowers in soups and stews, especially in central Europe. They were also used to colour a range of foods and drinks.

- **Healing**

Calendula is a classic healing remedy, familiar in the form of lotions or creams. These are often used to soothe and heal minor skin abrasions and eczema. It is possible to make your own version by simmering lanolin with as much dried flowers as it will carry for 20-30 minutes, then sieving off the flowers and stirring until the ointment is cool and set. This should then be kept in the fridge and used within 6 months.

The other strong tradition is to use the flowers as a tea as a 'lymphatic', when infections are accompanied by swollen lymph glands. Such symptoms often accompany throat and upper respiratory infections. However if they persist they should be checked by your doctor before being treated at home. The teas can also be used as a mouthwash or vaginal douche.

For its health benefits you should aim to have 1-4 grams of dried flowers daily, in teas.

Is there anything to watch out for?

Calendula is safe to take in the vast majority of cases. People with known sensitivity to other Compositae (such as chrysanthemums or daisies) may get allergic reactions to calendula, but this is rare. There have been suggestions that calendula taken internally is a risk to pregnancy: however there is no substantiation for this.

For much more information read about calendula on [HerbalReality.com](https://www.HerbalReality.com)

The College of Medicine is grateful for the support of Pukka Herbs in creating Healing Gardens at health centres, schools and other locations.