

Round the year Marigold cultivation for higher return

In India, marigold is one of the most commonly grown flowers and used extensively on religious and social functions in different forms. It is free flowering, short duration providing attractive coloured flowers in good shape, size and keeping quality. Besides, its petals are used for decoration and extraction of xanthophylls which has become as one of the organic sources of edible colour for processing products and for poultry feed.

Marigolds are one of the most important decorative plants. In several states they are grown commercially in fields where they are claimed by some to be more profitable than any other crop. Marigold is even helping to play a vital role as a cash crop to poor farmers in the north of India.

Selection of Variety:-

The growth and flowering in marigold are generally governed by day length and temperature, therefore selection of variety should be according to climatic conditions. The varieties suitable for growing in different seasons are:

S. no.	Season	Variety
1.	Winter season	Pusa Narangi Gaiinda, Pusa Basanti Gaiinda, Tiger (yellow and red), African Giant (Double orange and double yellow) and Inca Hybrid (orange and yellow).
2.	Summer season	Cracker Jack and Locals.(Flowers gold, orange and yellow coloured.)
3.	Rainy season	African Gaint Tall Orange, African Giant Tall Yellow, Calcutta, Jaffri (yellow and orange) and Laddu Gaiinda

Sowing and transplanting

Marigold crop can be raised round the year i.e. rainy season, winter season, and summer season. Sowing planting time and Flowering period for each season are as under:-

Planting Season	Sowing time	Transplanting	Flowering period	Remarks
Summer Season	January-February	February-March	Mid -May-July	Size of flowers smaller due to high temperature. Good returns obtained due to higher market rates.
Rainy Season	Mid-June	Mid-July	Mid-September -November	Crop fetches good price due to higher market demands.
Winter Season	Mid-September	Mid-October	Mid -January	Profuse blooming, best quality of flowers. Higher yield per unit area but low market rates.

The plan for producing Marigold flower from Oct to July for getting good profit is shown below:-

S.No.	Season	Planting time	Flowering duration
1	Summer	15 Feb	15 Apr – 15 Jun
2		15 march	15 June – 20July
3			
4	Rainy	15 July	15 Oct – 05 Dec.
5		15 August	25 Oct – 25 Dec
6	Winter	15 Oct	15 Dec – 05 March
7		15 Nov	10 Feb – 05 March

By adopting this plan for producing flowers farmers can maximum profit during Rainy season(60-65qtl) & Winter season(50-55qtl) higher yield and crop fetches good price due to higher market demand than the spring & summer season.

Harvesting, Yield & Post Harvest Management

Marigold flowers are plucked when they have attained the full size. Harvesting of flowers is done in the evening, just before the flowers are fully opened. Field should be irrigated before plucking so those flowers keep well for longer period after harvest. Regular picking improves the yield. After harvesting, flowers should be kept in shade with proper ventilation facility. Then they are graded on the basis of size. The bruised and deformed flowers should be discarded. The packing of flowers should be done in polythene bags or bamboo baskets. Flower yield depends upon season of planting and cultural practices adopted. On average a fresh flower yields of 40-45 qtl /ha during summer season. 60-65 qtl /ha in rainy season, and 50-55 qtl /ha in winter season can be obtained.