

MARIGOLD



The true Marigold (*Calendula officinalis*) is occasionally used to produce small amounts of absolute, but this is very rarely available commercially and most oil of *Calendula* is produced by infusing the petals and sometimes leaves, in a bland oil. This infused oil is very valuable in aromatherapy for its powerful skin-healing properties. Although appearing green in the bottle, it gives a beautiful golden tint to any cream to which it is added, and this is its main mode of use. I often put *Calendula* oil into creams for badly cracked skin, especially for people whose hands are damaged by rough work, cold, exposure to water, etc. It is also very useful in creams for the minor skin problems of children, nappy rashes and grazes. Nursing mothers have used this cream to heal cracked nipples which would not respond to other treatments. It will also help varicose veins and chronic ulcers.

The old herbalists ascribe a host of useful properties to the Marigold flower, ranging from strengthening the eyesight to drawing evil humours out of the head.

Virtually all the early writers state that Marigold 'comforts the heart' and it would seem that this is meant both physically and metaphorically, for such phrases as 'comforteth the heart and spirits' recur as often as 'strengthens and succours the heart in fevers'. Fresh or dried Marigold petals were added to broths, both for the flavour and their beneficial properties, and are a delightful addition to salads, from such uses the flower acquired the name of Pot Marigold.

It is important to distinguish between the true Marigold (*Calendula*) and the African Marigold (several varieties of *Tagetes*). Although the oils are unrelated to each other in terms of properties, smell or botanical families, some suppliers and therapists confuse them, and indeed I have even seen an oil listed as *Calendula /Taget*! If you want to use *Calendula*, be quite certain i ha I this is, in fact, what you are buying.

