

Corn Marigold

Glebionis segetum



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Lifecycle

Corn Marigold is an annual plant flowering between June and October. It prefers light, sandy and slightly acidic free-draining soils but will grow on soils derived from calcareous rocks. It can grow both in infertile and more fertile conditions. Seeds usually germinate in early spring, though early autumn seedlings are able to survive frosts, and the seeds are thought to be long-lived.

Habitat

This species is most often found in arable farmland, but can also be found in other disturbed sites such as rubbish tips, road verges, waste ground and over-grazed pasture. It is often included in cornfield flower seed mixes with Austrian Chamomile (a recent introduction to GB), Cornflower and Corncockle.

Survey method

Corn Marigold is rarely the subject of a population survey, but where it is being monitored individual plants are easy to identify where they are solitary, but larger populations should be estimated.

Corn Marigold is a member of the daisy family (Asteraceae). It is a tall, branched plant of 10-60 cm in height. Fleshy lobed alternate leaves are approximately 10 cm long and greyish-green in colour with a hairless, waxy surface. The orangey-yellow composite flower heads are typical of the daisy family and can measure up to 7 cm in diameter. Petals are notched. The inner disc florets produce cylindrical unwinged seeds and outer ray florets produced broad-winged seeds.

Conserving the diversity of arable flowering plants is important for pollinators such as bees and butterflies and for healthy ecosystems. Members of the daisy family, such as Corn Marigold, are particularly visited by hoverflies.

Distribution

Large displays of Corn Marigold are associated with the western seaboard of Great Britain and the free-draining shales and sands of Cornwall, Devon, Gower, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion and the Outer Hebrides in Scotland. One of the most well known sites where Corn Marigold creates spectacular displays with Common Poppy is on the National Trust's ancient strip fields at West Pentire, Cornwall.

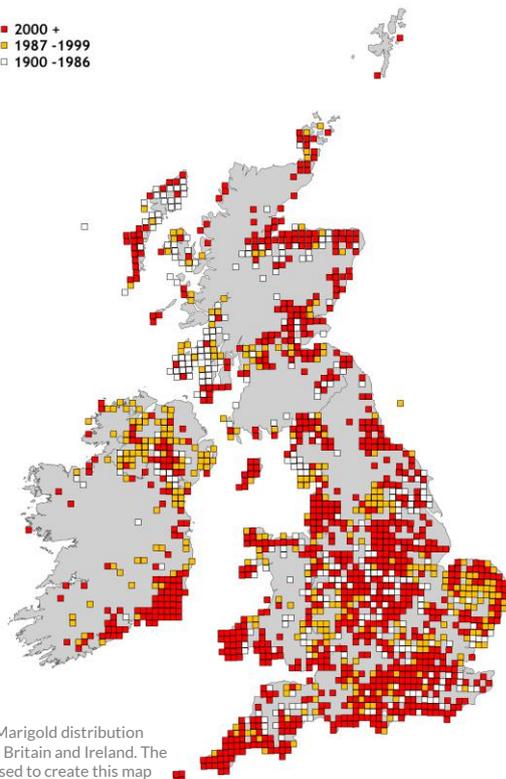
GB status and rarity

Due to its widespread decline, Corn Marigold is classified as 'Vulnerable' in The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain (2005), and is also considered 'Vulnerable' in the Vascular Plant Red List for England (2014).

Protection under the law

This plant is not protected in any UK countries.

■ 2000 +
■ 1987 -1999
□ 1900 -1986



Corn Marigold distribution across Britain and Ireland. The data used to create this map has been provided under license from the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) and accessed from the Society's online database.

Reasons for decline

Corn Marigold has declined due to the intensification of arable farming, such as seed cleaning, liming and herbicide use. Although it is slightly resistant to herbicide, specific herbicides have been developed to target Corn Marigold and it declined sharply as a result. Although autumn seedlings may be able to survive the frost, a change from spring to autumn cultivation of arable fields may also have contributed to the decline. Germination of Corn Marigold seeds is triggered by cultivation bringing the seeds up to the soil surface. Minimum tillage and direct drilling of crop seed does not disturb the soil sufficiently to stimulate growth.

Habitat management for Corn Marigold

Corn Marigold requires annual disturbance and the creation of bare ground during the spring (March-April) or autumn (September-November). If Corn Marigold has been present on a site previously, regular spring or autumn cultivation may be sufficient to enable dormant seeds to germinate.

Sowing Corn Marigold seed

Corn Marigold is often a component of cornfield flower mixes alongside Common Poppy, Austrian Chamomile, Cornflower and Corncockle.

When sowing, seeds should be spread thinly on the soil and not buried as they will not grow if too deep. Soil should be pressed down to ensure the seeds are in contact with the ground. Seeds may be mixed with sand to achieve an even distribution. The ground should be cultivated annually, either in the spring or autumn to stimulate fallen seeds to germinate. Ground should remain undisturbed until after the flowering and seed setting period.

Corn Marigold is quite a robust plant and consideration should be given to species that prefer open space. It shouldn't be sown into areas where there are plants that require sparse vegetation, such as Prickly Poppy.



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