Mexican Tarragon

Tagetes lucida

Height: 30 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Mexican Mint Marigold, Texas Tarragon, Sweet Mace

Description:

This variety has foliage with the fragrance of anise; used for flavoring food; striking daisy like flowers in summer; prefers sun and is drought tolerant

Edible Qualities

Mexican Tarragon is a perennial herb that is commonly grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. The fragrant narrow compound green leaves are usually harvested from early to late summer. The leaves have a sharp taste and a strong fragrance.

The leaves are most often used in the following ways:

- Cooking
- Drying
- Seasoning

Features & Attributes

Mexican Tarragon features showy yellow daisy flowers with gold eyes at the ends of the stems from late summer to early fall. Its attractive fragrant narrow compound leaves remain green in color throughout the season.



Mexican Tarragon flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Mexican Tarragon
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This is an herbaceous perennial herb with a mounded form. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition. This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Mexican Tarragon is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- General Garden Use
- Herb Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Mexican Tarragon will grow to be about 30 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 18 inches. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant is quite ornamental as well as edible, and is as much at home in a landscape or flower garden as it is in a designated herb garden. It should only be grown in full sunlight. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Mexican Tarragon is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. It can be used either as 'filler' or as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, depending on the height and form of the other plants used in the container planting. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.