

Did You Know?



Mexican Tarragon *Tagetes lucida*

- Mexican tarragon is not related to French tarragon *Artemisia dracunculus* 'Sativa', but is related to the common marigold.
- The fragrance and anise-like flavor of Mexican tarragon is similar to French tarragon and is often substituted for it in climates where French tarragon is difficult to grow (warm, humid or rainy climates) due to its susceptibility to disease.
- Rather than big yellow or orange showy flowers all summer, Mexican tarragon has small yellow flowers in late summer – early fall.
- Mexican tarragon is also called sweet marigold, Mexican marigold, pericon, sweet mace or Mexican mint marigold and is often sold in grocery stores as winter tarragon or Texas tarragon.
- Unlike French tarragon, Mexican tarragon does not have Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) status with the United States Food and Drug Administration.
- This plant thrives in the heat and grows best in zones 9–11.
- The Aztecs had a variety of uses for Mexican tarragon. They added it to a chocolate drink made from cocoa, giving it a spicy flavor. It was used in religious ceremonies and other rituals. For example, it was burned as incense as well as rubbed on the chest as a safeguard for crossing a river.
- Traditionally in the Mexican culture, this plant was used to treat intestinal issues such as stomach aches, nausea and colic.
- The Huichal Indians in Mexico include Mexican tarragon (or yahutli or tumutsali) in a mixture that is smoked.
- Tea and salsas are among the current day uses Mexican tarragon in Latin America.