FLOWERS · A SUNNY PORCH OR PATIO IN MILD WEATHER

Let's grow calendula.

Calendula officinalis

This plan is for **Bon Bon calendula**

One compact plant, with cheerful flowers to keep picking.

12-inch pot **1 nursery plant**

Before you start

Start in mild spring or fall weather; protect tender nursery growth from frost, and expect slower flowering during prolonged summer heat.

By jennyzhuang

Sources checked September 28, 2026 View sources

LIGHT

Sun for flowers

Give it at least 6 hours of direct sun; some afternoon shade can help in hot summers.

WATER

Moderate, with drainage

Keep seeds and new roots moist; use the top-inch check only after establishment.

FEEDING

No extra at the start

Use the mix's starter nutrients; heavy feeding can reduce the flower display.

BEFORE YOU START

Your little kit.

- ✓ One draining pot, 12 inches wide and at least 10 inches deep
- ✓ Fresh potting mix, a watering can, and scissors
- ✓ 1 compact Bon Bon calendula nursery plant

THE SOIL

Miracle-Gro Organic Potting Mix (US; includes starter nutrients—check your bag)

Start with what's on this list. Add plant food only when the feeding section says it's needed.

YOUR SIMPLE GROWING PLAN

One pot. Here's the plan.

A sunny porch or patio in mild weather. Start with **nursery plant**.

THE POT

12-inch pot

About 12 inches wide and at least 10 inches deep, with drainage; keep one compact Bon Bon plant.

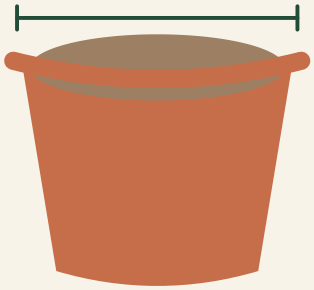
HOW MANY

1 nursery plant

Choose a Calendula Bon Bon plant, not a Tagetes marigold.

THE CONTAINER

12-inch pot



Drainage holes

START WITH

1 nursery plant



Illustration · not to scale

12-inch pot · 1 nursery plant About 12 inches wide and at least 10 inches deep, with drainage; keep one compact Bon Bon plant. Choose a Calendula Bon Bon plant, not a Tagetes marigold. Original illustration; not to scale.

01

Choose a compact calendula

Look for Calendula officinalis and Bon Bon on the label. The name pot marigold does not mean it is the same plant as a French marigold.

02

Plant at nursery depth

Moisten the mix and set the root ball at its previous level. Leave an inch below the rim and water until the pot drains.

03

Let the new roots settle

Check the root ball and nearby mix daily and keep both lightly moist. After the plant is growing well, use the top-inch moisture check below. Leave room for air between plants.

04

Snip spent flowers

Remove faded flower heads before they set seed. A few stems can go in a vase; keep healthy leaves on the plant.

Help with the setup: drainage holes and saucers · potting mix vs. garden soil.

Other ways to start

Sow two seeds instead

Sow 2 Bon Bon seeds about 2 inches apart near the center, ½ inch deep. Keep the seed zone moist. After true leaves appear, snip the weaker seedling at mix level; do not pull on its neighbor's roots. Keep one plant. This two-seed layout gives you a spare, not a second plant to crowd in.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE

Water & fertilizer at a glance.

WATER WHEN

Keep the seed zone and young roots moist. Check a new nursery plant's root ball too. Once growing well, check daily; water as the top inch starts drying, then drain and empty the saucer.

FERTILIZER

No added fertilizer for this starting plan

AMOUNT

None

WHAT THAT AMOUNT COVERS

No fertilizer dose to calculate.

HOW OFTEN TO FEED

No automatic feeding schedule.

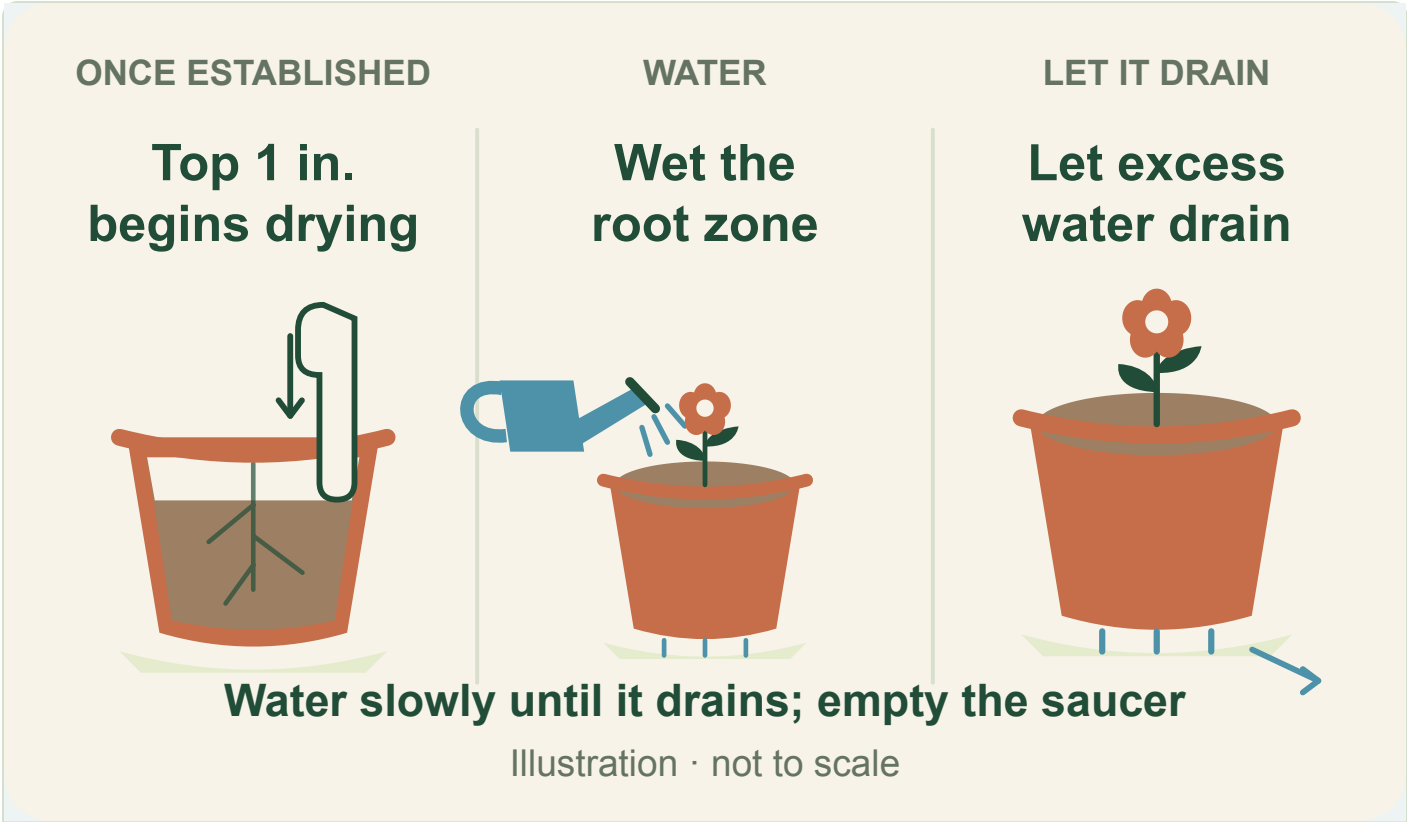
WHEN TO START OR PAUSE

Add no extra fertilizer with fresh enriched mix. If growth later weakens, check light, moisture and drainage before reassessing the bag's nutrients; few flowers alone do not call for feeding.

01 / EVERYDAY CARE

When to water.

Check each morning. Keep the seed zone and young roots moist, not soggy; misting the surface alone can leave deeper mix dry. For a nursery start, check its original root ball as well as the surrounding mix until roots settle in. Once growing well, water when the top inch starts drying. Pour slowly onto the mix until water exits the holes, then empty the saucer. Check again in heat or wind. The amount changes with the pot and weather; there is no fixed cupful or daily watering rule.



Check before watering. Keep the seed zone and young roots moist. Check a new nursery plant's root ball too. Once growing well, check daily; water as the top inch starts drying, then drain and empty the saucer. Original illustration; not to scale.

> **The easy rule**
>
> Check first. Water only when the plant needs it.

02 / PLANT FOOD

Exactly what to feed it.

Add no extra fertilizer at planting with the fresh enriched mix listed here. Its starter feed is already a fertilizer input. Calendula needs restrained feeding, not a bloom booster on top of a new bag of mix.

THIS STARTING PLAN

No added fertilizer



Follow the conditions in this plan

Illustration · not to scale

None No fertilizer dose to calculate. No automatic feeding schedule. Add no extra fertilizer with fresh enriched mix. If growth later weakens, check light, moisture and drainage before reassessing the bag's nutrients; few flowers alone do not call for feeding. Original illustration; not to scale.

NO EXTRA FERTILIZER AT PLANTING

Start with the nutrients in the mix

Keep separate fertilizer at zero for this starter plan; do not turn the bag's general feeding advice into an automatic weekly program. If growth later weakens, check light, moisture, drainage, and the bag's nutrient information before choosing a supplement. Starter nutrients do run out, but summer heat and unremoved old flowers can also reduce blooms. This is not a claim that an old pot never needs food.

03 / WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Sprouting and first flowers

Bon Bon is a compact series, about 12 inches tall and wide. A nursery plant may already have buds. From seed, allow roughly 5–15 days for emergence, then time for leafy growth before flowering.

Choose a mild growing season

Calendula favors mild conditions and can slow down during prolonged summer heat. Choose a local spring or fall window and protect tender nursery growth if frost is forecast.

For regional planting windows, find your local Cooperative Extension office ↗.

Something looking off?

Can I start calendula indoors for earlier flowers?

Yes. Wisconsin Extension suggests starting 6–8 weeks before your local last frost. Use individual seed pots and provide strong light once they sprout. Gradually introduce outdoor sun and wind before planting out; a protected indoor seedling is not ready for a sudden full day on the patio.

Does white powder on the leaves mean I should feed it?

No. A white or gray powdery coating can be powdery mildew, which calendula can get. Give the plant more air and avoid extra nitrogen. Mild patches need not mean losing the plant; monitor new growth and flowering. Get the problem identified if it spreads. Fertilizer will not remove a fungal coating.

Will the same calendula plant come back next year?

Treat this as an annual starter project. Calendula can drop seed and produce new seedlings, so a new plant next spring does not mean the old plant survived. Keep the Bon Bon label and buy that named type again when you want the same compact layout; do not assume a volunteer seedling has the same size.

Removing faded flowers and choosing a size

Remove faded flower heads

If faded heads remain, the plant puts energy into seed formation. Snipping them regularly helps extend the display without adding another product.

Choose a compact calendula for this pot

Bon Bon grows about 12 inches tall and wide. The 12-inch width, 10-inch depth, and one-plant layout are our roomy beginner recipe, not an Extension-tested minimum. Taller cutting cultivars need a different space plan. The reference photo does not prove the cultivar or show a trial of this recipe.

Help with your next step.

Read the starter-feed instructions on your potting mix

Check what the bag already supplies before beginning calendula's later feeding plan.

Compare more flower pots

Compare starting methods and pot sizes if you want another small outdoor flower project.

BEHIND THIS GUIDE

Where the advice comes from.

Plant care is based on the sources below. Planting layouts and beginner routines combine that guidance into one practical plan; they are editorial choices, not results from a Plant Care Steps growing trial.

- Wisconsin Extension: Bon Bon, seed depth, flowering, and restrained feeding ↗
  https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/calendula-calendula-officinalis/
- NC State: calendula growing conditions and identity ↗
  https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/calendula-officinalis/
- Iowa State: nutrients and care in containers ↗
  https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/care-plants-growing-containers
- Manufacturer: starter feed in the named potting mix ↗
  https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/potting-mix/miracle-gro-organic-potting-mix/78951430.html
- Minnesota Extension: seed moisture, thinning, and acclimating seedlings ↗
  https://extension.umn.edu/garden-and-home/yard-and-garden/gardening-in-minnesota/starting-seeds-indoors
- Minnesota Extension: recognizing and managing powdery mildew ↗
  https://extension.umn.edu/garden-and-home/yard-and-garden/gardening-in-minnesota/yard-and-garden-problems/powdery-mildew-in-the-flower-garden
- RHS: calendula as an annual that can self-seed ↗
  https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/calendula/

Something needs updating? Suggest a correction

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Compiled with AI assistance. These first-edition guides have not yet had an independent horticultural review. Read our editorial approach.