

# Mexican / Bolivian Sunflower / Tree Marigold (*Tithonia diversifolia*) Un-rooted Cuttings Planting instructions



These plants grow much larger than other Mexican Sunflowers, reaching heights of 20 FEET or more if not trimmed. Bold and colorful, they draw butterflies and hummingbirds to your garden with fragrant 3" wide daisylike, golden blooms that emerge in mid to late summer and last until frost. Tolerates (**actually prefers!**) infertile soil, drought, and neglect. **Plant Type:** Perennial zones 9b and warmer, Annual in colder zones

## Growing Instructions for your cuttings:

It is **CRITICAL** THAT YOU DO NOT OVER WATER THESE CUTTINGS!

Plant your cuttings **DIRECTLY IN THE GROUND** where you want them to grow. Make sure the soil is SANDY and WELL DRAINING. They should be in full or mostly sun for best blooms later in the season. Dig a hole that is deep enough to place ½ of the cutting in the ground and is about 6" – 8" across. If your soil is very powdery dry, run some water in the bottom of the hole. Place your cutting in the ground so that about ½ of it is above ground and ½ underground. Begin to fill in the hole with the soil (sand) that you removed; if your soil is very dry, water in as you fill the hole up so that the cutting is surrounded by damp, sandy soil. Be sure to get all the air pockets out as you go and firm the soil to the cutting so there is good contact between the two. (You may use Root-tone or other rooting hormone on your cuttings, but it is generally not necessary.)

With sandy, well draining soil, you may water your cuttings once a day (I suggest in the evening), but no more. Don't let water stand; if they stay too wet, they will rot rather than root. Within 2-3 weeks you should see new growth beginning on your cuttings. If the stem begins to turn brown (especially at the soil line), it is likely that your cutting has been overwatered or is in too damp a place and is rotting. Please trust me when I say these cannot handle a lot of water or damp soil.

I have had limited success rooting these in containers for this very reason, most potting soil simply stays too damp for them. If you want to try and root them in a container, I suggest using something like a 5 gallon bucket with plenty of drain holes drilled in the bottom. Place plenty of rocks or bark in the bottom of the bucket to allow good drainage and use a very sandy, well draining soil. If you don't have access to sandy soil, then use a cactus type potting mix or add vermiculite to regular potting mix to make it drain well. Plant your cuttings as described above; you may want to put 2-3 cuttings per a 5 gallon bucket. Water your cuttings once a day until you see new growth, but don't let the soil get soggy or water stand. When you see new growth starting, cut back watering to 2-3 times a week or when the top 1" of the soil is dry.

After your plants are growing and become established, they do not require supplemental watering except in the most extremely dry conditions. If the leaves wilt badly in mid-day, then water them; otherwise, leave them alone.

Be sure to leave plenty of room for each plant; these plants will grow over 20' high and easily 5' wide over time in areas where they are hardy. If you live in an area where these are perennials (zone 9a and warmer), they will die back with a frost/freeze, but will return from the roots in subsequent years and be even larger than before. I cut mine back in the spring when all danger of frost has past but before new growth starts.

If you live in an area where these are not hardy and you want to keep a plant from year to year, you can take cuttings at the end of the season and root them as described above in a container and keep them in a greenhouse overwinter then set them out in the spring when temperatures warm into the 70's during the day and 50's at night and all danger of frost has past.