



## Shock Wave Denim Petunias



This petunia is listed as a good complementary plant with orange Taishan marigolds. To read more, go to **click here**. Photo thanks to burpee.com.

Submitted by cnienaber on February 10, 2010 - 1:04pm.

## New marigolds (2-5)

By Norman Winter

McClatchy-Tribune News Service

Taishan marigolds were stars at the Beijing Olympics in 2008, and this spring you will have the opportunity to put them to the test in your garden too. This award-winning marigold series gets its name from Taishan Mountain, one of the five revered mountains in China.

These are large-flowered African marigolds that will be available in gold, orange and yellow. There is also a mix available, which is extremely showy. You'll find these to be rather compact, reaching 12 inches tall with a spread close to 10 inches. The branches are sturdy and easily supporting the large flowers, and they live up to flower's name, which means stability in Chinese.

Select a site in full sun for best blooming performance. The soil should be fertile and well drained. Tight, heavy, compact clay will yield less than satisfying results. If you find yourself with this dilemma, you can incorporate three to four inches of organic matter as you work your soil.

If this seems like back-breaking work, you also can plant on raised beds using a

prepared landscape planting mix. You'll notice this to be a common practice around commercial shopping centers and office complexes. The Taishan marigolds should be spaced about 10 inches apart. Be sure and add a good layer of mulch after planting to conserve moisture and deter weed growth.

The shorter stature of these marigolds makes them ideal for using at the front of the border. The Taishan Orange partners in flaming contrast with blue flowers like Victoria Blue salvia. You also can use them in large informal drifts where you might grow them adjacent to another drift of the new Shockwave Denim Blue petunia.

The Taishan Yellow could do the same although it will look even better with violet-colored partners. Try it at the front of the border with All Around Purple gomphrena in the back. You could likewise do an informal drift planted adjacent to a drift of Artist Purple ageratums.

For the long growing season, you'll want to keep your Taishan marigolds fed with light applications of a slow-release fertilizer about every four to six weeks. My favorite blend is a 12-6-6, but it really isn't that big of a deal. A little deadheading of old flowers will keep your plants looking picture perfect.

The Taishan also is well suited for use in mixed containers. I had the opportunity to see and photograph a wonderfully designed container in which Taishan Orange was used as a filler plant combined with the new Trusty Rusty coleus as the thriller and Can-Can Strawberry calibrachoa as the spiller.

Marigolds tend to be take-for-granted plants in today's garden, but they really offer a long season of bloom, making them among the best buys for your gardening dollar. They also can be planted at any time during the growing season. For a late season pick-me-up in August, you could hardly do better than the marigold.

This may seem like an endless winter, but spring is coming. When it does, be sure and put the Taishan marigolds high on your list.

Submitted by cnienaber on February 5, 2010 - 11:12am.