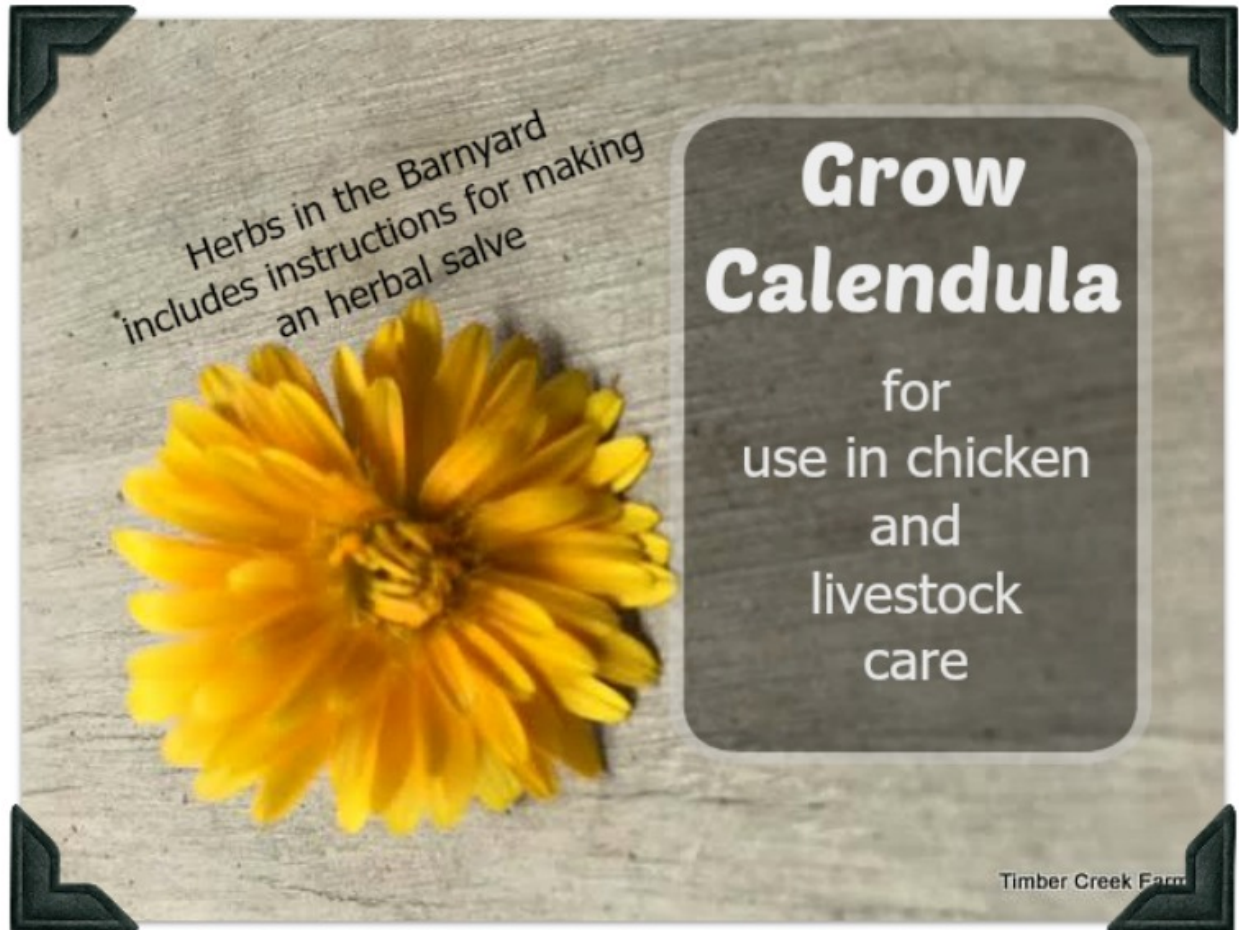


# Grow Calendula for Use in Chicken and Livestock Care



After beginning to use more herbal treatments on my farm animals, I realized that I need to also grow Calendula. The correct name for Calendula is *Calendula officinalis*, and the common name is Pot Marigold. Calendula flowers and leaves are edible and it is a useful companion plant in the garden. Calendula helps repel damaging insects.

Until this past year, I had trouble getting Calendula to grow. After reading some more tips on this herb, I planted it in a planter and it took off! Calendula isn't actually hard to grow, I just needed to provide a sunny location and not over water the soil. I had plenty of Calendula blossoms all summer and into the fall. The sunny yellow flower is so bright it is

hard not to smile when you see it. As each blossom began to open I would enjoy it for a moment and then snip it off to dry it with the others.

What were my main reasons for wanting to grow Calendula? First, I did a lot of reading on using it for livestock care in the areas with inflammation, infection, and fungus. In many cases, the same herbs we would use to topically treat inflammation, burns, abrasions, and fungal problems on our skin, can be safely used on our animals. Always address any questions you might have on treating livestock, with a veterinarian or licensed herbalist.

## Using Calendula Remedies for Chickens

One common use for this herb is to grow Calendula to add to chicken feed. The bright yellow petals are tasty to the birds and the vitamins and color enhances the yolk color, naturally. Calendula helps with inflammation in the mouth or thrush or yeast overgrowth. I wish I had read last year. I had a favorite hen that became ill. A side effect of her illness was a bad case of thrush. If I had known that making a tea from the petals of the Calendula flower might have helped get rid of the thrush!

To [make a tea](#) from the petals of the herb, use about 1 tablespoon of dried petals and one cup of boiling water. Allow to steep for approximately 15 minutes. This could be administered by syringe, carefully making sure the bird swallows the liquid. The Free Range Life has a great post on [30 Uses for Calendula](#).

No matter if you are treating an illness or preventing one through good herbal care, grow Calendula for treating your chickens.

**Note – Do you want to learn more about herbs? Here's an online course offered by [Herbal Academy](#). It is a beginner level herbal course and it's totally free. [Want to sign up?](#) (registration closes January 31, 2017 although classes begin January 10)**

## **Two Ways to Use Calendula in Livestock Care**

As noted above, making a tea from the dried petals will help with many skin irritations and infections. Put the Calendula tea in a spray bottle and keep it refrigerated. There has been evidence that Calendula can interfere with pregnancy, so do not administer to any pregnant animal or take it yourself, if pregnant.

Use the spray for cases of ringworm, hot spots, skin wounds, scrapes, and flea dermatitis. Now that I know this, I can try it on my barn cat. He has a patch near his tail that the vet said was caused by flea bites. I will let you know how it works. Keep in mind that cats metabolize herbs and oils differently than other species. Use with care and observe for any adverse reactions to using Calendula oil or tea on cats. Calendula is a very gentle herb but it is better to be aware of the possibilities.



Another good product to have on hand is a salve made from the Calendula blossoms. If you grow Calendula, save the blossoms until you have enough to make an infused oil. [The Nerdy Farmwife](#) has a post on using Calendula and making the infused oil and then making a salve. I used a similar method when making [dandelion salve](#) this past summer.

## **Making a Salve after you Grow Calendula**

The first thing you will need to do to make a salve is make an infused oil. The proportion should be 1:2, using 1 part dried petals and 2 parts. In other words, fill a canning jar of any size, half full of dried petals. Add olive oil to fill the jar. Almond oil or sunflower oil can also be used, if preferred. Set the jar into a pan of simmering water.

Another method is to use a crock pot which may be easier to maintain since the oil needs to stay warm for a few hours. I

filled the crockpot with water to about half way up the jar height. Set the jar of oil and petals into the crock pot and allow to heat for several hours.

The photo shows herbal oils being infused in the crockpot but the herbs are not Calendula. The process is the same for any herb.



Strain the oil and save the petals. You can feed the oily petals in small amounts to the chickens.

Making the salve is easy, too.

(I learned this method from [Grow Forage Cook Ferment](#))

Use approximately 1 and a half cups of infused oil.

2 ounces of bees wax cut into small chunks or use 2 ounces of bees wax pellets

2 ounces of solid coconut oil

Add the beeswax and coconut oil to the strained warm oil and continue to heat until the three oils are melted together.

Have small containers, tins or jars ready to pour the mixture into. The salve will setup quickly when removed from the heat.

## **Add Labels to Your Containers!**

Remember to label all containers with the ingredients used to make the salve. Are you growing an herb garden? Are you ready to use the herbs from your garden to make healthy healing salves and oils? Stay tuned as I go through the [Intro Herbal Course](#) from Herbal Academy. I will be sharing more about how I incorporate herbs in our plan to keep our livestock and chickens healthy. Or better yet, join in the fun and take the course, by [signing up here](#).

