

## *Celosia plumosa* Cockscomb<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

Celosia has two types of flowers, the cockscomb, *Celosia cristata* and the plume types, *Celosia plumosa* (Fig. 1). The tight, velvety texture of the Cockscomb flowers look like brain tissue to some people. The fluffy, light, airy texture of the plume types blow freely in a breeze and are planted more often. Both come in a variety of colors.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Celosia plumosa*

**Pronunciation:** see-LOE-see-uh ploo-MOE-suh

**Common name(s):** Cockscomb

**Family:** *Amaranthaceae*

**Plant type:** annual

**USDA hardiness zones:** all zones (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 7:** Jun; Jul

**Planting month for zone 8:** May; Jun; Jul



**Figure 1.** Cockscomb

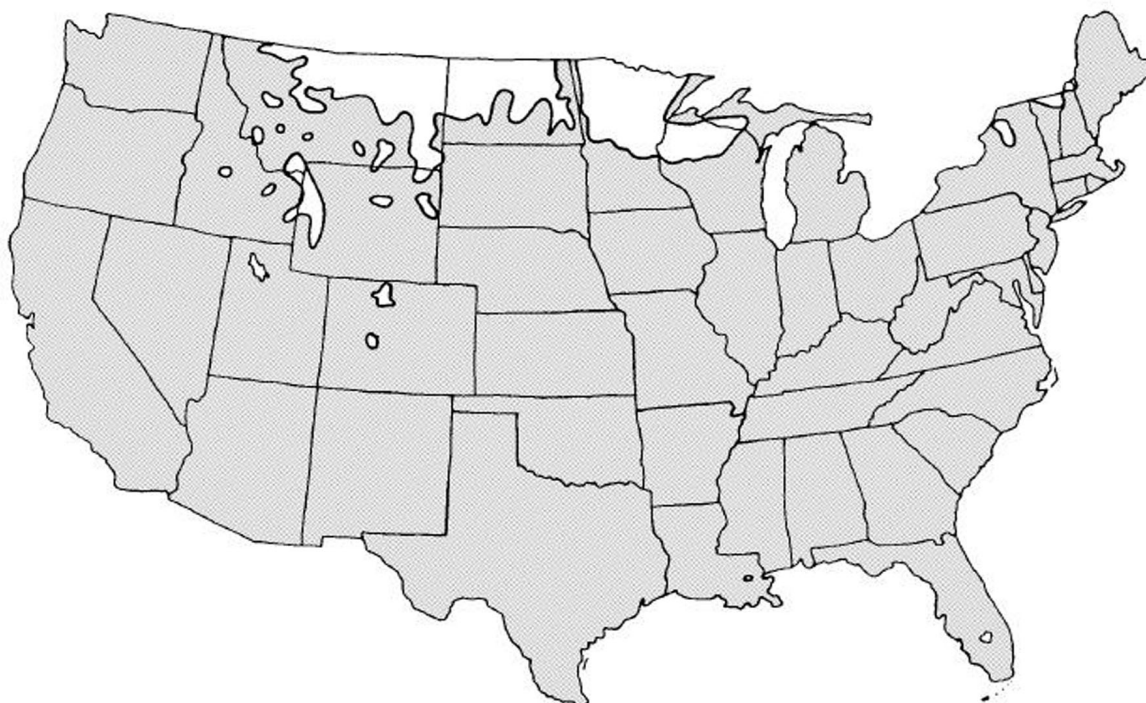
**Planting month for zone 9:** Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct; Nov

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct; Nov

**Origin:** not native to North America

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**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Uses:** edging; mass planting; container or above-ground planter

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

### Description

**Height:** .5 to 2 feet

**Spread:** .5 to 1 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** fine

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** linear; oblong

**Leaf venation:** bowed

**Leaf type and persistence:** not applicable

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** purple or red

**Fall color:** not applicable

**Fall characteristic:** not applicable

### Flower

**Flower color:** yellow; pink; purple; orange

**Flower characteristic:** showy

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** no fruit

**Fruit length:** no fruit

**Fruit cover:** no fruit

**Fruit color:** not applicable

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig color:** green

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

### Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** acidic; sand; loam; clay

**Drought tolerance:**

**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown

**Plant spacing:** 6 to 12 inches

### Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** not applicable

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** may self-seed each year

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

### Use and Management

The plants prefer a fertile, moist soil with lots of organic matter. They do best in full sun but will tolerate partial shade. The flowers can be dried with red flowers giving best results. Any check in growth of young plants will bring them into bloom prematurely. This spoils later blooming. Causes of premature blooming are exposure to cold temperatures when planted too early, or remaining in packs or flats too long in the spring. Celosia grows one to one and a half feet tall and is spaced 10 to 12 inches apart.

The heads may be larger if the seed is planted directly into the garden. If started indoors they germinate in one week at 70 to 75 degrees. Plant indoors six weeks before the desired outdoor planting date. Seedlings should be grown warm and on the dry side.

Cristata cultivars include the dwarf 'Jewel Box' and 'Olympia' series and the taller (18 to 24 inches) 'Floradale' and 'Chief' series. Plumosa series and cultivars include the dwarf 'Kimono' and 'Geisha' series and the taller types including 'Apricot Brandy', 'Castle' series, 'Century' series, 'Forest Fire' and 'New Look'.

Mites can cause loss of healthy green foliage coloration but this pest is not common on Celosia.

### Pests and Diseases

Leaf spots may occasionally attack Celosia but the problem is not serious.