

Grow Your Own Sunflower

The common sunflower is native to North America and grows in dry, sunny locations. Bees, butterflies and hummingbirds dine on the nectar and help pollinate the flowers. You have probably eaten a snack of sunflower seeds or watched as songbirds and squirrels enjoy this treat.

You can grow your own sunflower plant in a sunny spot in a garden or even a pot. All you need is sunlight, soil, water and warmth.

Share your project with others on social media using the hashtag #BeautyOutsideYourDoor

Here's What You Need

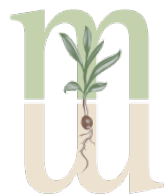
1. Sunflower seeds
2. Sunny spot (receives 6-8 hours of sunlight per day)
3. A garden or a container with drainage holes
 - Use a 10-12-inch diameter pot with drainage holes for two-feet tall and shorter sunflowers
 - Use a 3-5 gallon pot for taller sunflower varieties
4. Potting mix
5. Fertilizer
6. Sunflower Growth Chart (page 3)
7. Plant tags (optional)

Getting Started

1. Print the Sunflower Growth Chart (page 3) or make your own
2. Write down the following information
 - Name of the sunflower you are growing
 - Height your sunflower is supposed to grow
 - Date you planted the seeds
 - Date seeds sprout (green appeared)
 - Measure and record how tall your plant is every week
3. Take photos or draw pictures of your plant throughout the summer
4. Share photos of your sunflower with others on social media by using the hashtag #BeautyOutsideYourDoor

Growing Sunflowers in a Pot

1. Buy a plant pot or recycle an item found in your house, garage or pots set out for recycling at your garden center
 - The pot should be 10-12 inches in diameter for two-feet-tall and shorter sunflowers
 - Use a 3-5 gallon pot for taller varieties
2. Add drainage holes to the bottom of the container, if needed
3. Fill the pot with a potting mix
4. Add a granular slow release fertilizer like Milorganite to the potting mix according to the directions on the fertilizer packet. If using a liquid fertilizer, apply after planting the seeds.
5. Plant seeds 1 inch deep and 4-5 inches apart or as recommended on the seed packet



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Growing Sunflowers in the Ground

1. Locate a sunny spot in a garden in your yard or make a new garden
2. Remove any weeds and loosen the soil
3. Add fertilizer to the soil according to the fertilizer label directions
4. Plant seeds 1 inch deep and 6 inches apart

Helping Seeds Grow

1. Whether growing in the ground or a pot, seeds need
 - Moisture and warmth to wake up and start to grow
 - Soil to give the seeds a home and keep them warm and moist
 - Some seeds need light to sprout but not your sunflower seeds
2. Water the soil often enough so it feels damp but is not soggy wet

Caring for Your Sunflower

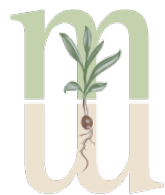
- All plants need sunlight, water, and food (fertilizer/nutrients in the soil) to grow
 - Sunflowers need 6-8 hours of sunshine per day
 - Check soil moisture daily; water thoroughly when the top inch of soil is dry
 - As plants grow taller, they grow more roots and need less water
 - Continue to check pots daily; water when the top few inches of soil are dry
 - Water plants in the garden every few days or once a week when the top few inches of soil are dry
 - Give them a big drink
 - In containers – water until extra water runs out the pot
 - In the garden – use 5 pints (a bit more than ½ gallon) per square foot for every two feet along the row
- Tall sunflowers with large flowers may need support especially in windy areas
 - Secure a tall bamboo or wooden stake 6 inches in the ground at planting
 - Loosely tie the stem of the sunflower to the stake as it grows

Watch for Visitors to Your Sunflower

- Sunflowers attract insects, hummingbirds, songbirds and squirrels. Make a list, draw pictures or take photos of visitors to your sunflower
- We'd like to see these too. Share your photos on social media using the hashtag #BeautyOutsideYourDoor

Harvesting Sunflower Seeds

- The seeds are ripe and ready to harvest when
 - The back of the flower is yellow like a banana or brown
 - Most of the yellow petals fall off
 - You can easily rub off the fuzzy covering on the seeds
- You may want to protect some of the seeds from hungry birds and squirrels
 - Cover the flower with a paper bag or cheesecloth as soon as seeds start to form
- Remove the flower from the plant as soon as the seeds are ripe
 - Eat the seeds fresh, roast a few of them or use them to feed the birds



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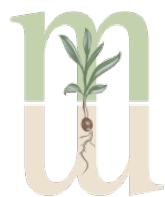
Sunflower Growth Chart

Have fun planting and growing your sunflowers this summer. Be sure to record how fast they grow and who stops by the flowers for a visit.

Visit melindamyers.com for more gardening projects as well as videos, growing tips and helpful information for gardeners of all ages and experience levels. Watch for my video this spring for tips on planting your sunflower in containers or the garden.

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DATE	HEIGHT	DATE	HEIGHT
Week One		Week Thirteen	
Week Two		Week Fourteen	
Week Three		Week Fifteen	
Week Four		Week Sixteen	
Week Five		Week Seventeen	
Week Six		Week Eighteen	
Week Seven		Week Nineteen	
Week Eight		Week Twenty	
Week Nine		Week Twenty-One	
Week Ten		Week Twenty-Two	
Week Eleven		Week Twenty-Three	
Week Twelve		Week Twenty-Four	



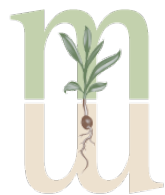
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What Pollinators Visited My Sunflower?

	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE
UNKNOWN BEE						
BUMBLEBEE						
HONEY BEE						
CARPENTER BEE						
OTHER BEE						
WASP						
HUMMINGBIRD						
BEETLE						
FLY						

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