

Sunflowers



Sunflowers are very popular plants to grow with children. They are bright and cheerful and your child will enjoy watching these flowers grow taller than they are!

When to Grow:

You can plant sunflower seeds outside from the middle of April to the end of May when the weather is warm. Your sunflowers will start to bloom in the summer, usually between July and September.

Where They Like to Grow:

Sunflowers love sunny spots that are safe from strong winds. They can grow in big pots or right in the garden, as long as the soil isn't too wet. They are not big fans of soggy roots.

How to Grow:

- 1 Fill your plant pot with compost until it is two-thirds full. If you are planting your sunflower seeds directly into the ground, remove any weeds and rake the soil until it is fine and crumbly.
- 2 Use a stick or your finger to make small holes in the soil about 12mm deep with 10cm between each hole.
- 3 Place a sunflower seed in each hole and cover them up with soil. Gently water the seeds.
- 4 You may wish to cover your seedlings with the top of a plastic bottle to protect them from slugs and snails.
- 5 As the plants grow, they may need thinning out so that they are around 40cm apart.
- 6 Once a sunflower reaches 1 metre, you will need to support the stem by tying it loosely to a cane.
- 7 Enjoy watching your sunflowers grow.

Did You Know...?

Sunflower seeds make a delicious snack. You can dry them and roast them in the oven to eat. The seeds are ready to pick when the back of the sunflower turns brown and the yellow petals have fallen off. Don't forget to leave some seeds behind for birds and other animals to enjoy!

Californian Poppies



Californian poppies are very easy to grow – they thrive in poor, dry soil and full sun with very little water. Perfect for the non-green-fingered among us.

When to Grow:

Californian poppies can be sown outdoors between March and May and will flower in the summer. The seeds can also be planted between August and October to flower in the following year.

Growing Conditions:

Californian poppies can be grown in a large pot or in the ground. They like to grow in a sunny position with well-drained soil.

How to Grow:

- 1 Fill your plant pot with seed compost almost to the top. If you are planting your poppy seeds directly into the ground, remove any weeds and rake the soil until it is fine and crumbly.
- 2 Take a small pinch of poppy seeds and sprinkle them thinly on top of the compost or soil.
- 3 Lightly cover the seeds with soil or compost. Gently water the seeds.
- 4 Poppy seedlings will start to appear between 7-30 days.
- 5 Once your poppies have bloomed, remove faded poppy flowers (deadheading) to encourage more flowers to grow.

Did You Know...?

Once the flowers are over, an egg-shaped seed pod is left behind. Listen out for the dry seed pods cracking open with a pop as they scatter their seeds.

Cosmos



Cosmos plants are quick and easy to grow from seed. They are low maintenance and come in a variety of colours including pink, purple, orange and white.

When to Grow:

Cosmos can be sown outdoors in May once the soil has warmed up. They will flower in the summer.

Growing Conditions:

Cosmos plants grow to be fairly tall (some varieties grow over 1 metre!) so are best suited to a large planter or a flowerbed. They like to grow in a sunny position with good soil.

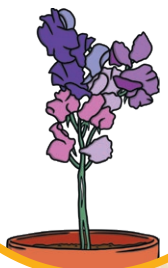
How to Grow:

- 1 Fill your plant pot with seed compost almost to the top. If you are planting your cosmos seeds directly into the ground, remove any weeds and rake the soil until it is fine and crumbly. Add garden compost to improve the soil.
- 2 Scatter the cosmos seeds thinly on top of the compost or soil, then cover them with 1cm soil.
- 3 Gently water the seeds.
- 4 You may need to thin out your seedlings to prevent overcrowding.
- 5 Once your cosmos has bloomed, remove faded flowers (deadheading) to encourage more flowers to grow.

Did You Know...?

Cosmos comes from the Greek word Kosmos which means beautiful! These beautiful flowers attract bees, butterflies and other insects.

Sweet Peas



Sweet peas are easy to grow flowers which can be found in a range of beautiful colours. They smell amazing and are perfect for a cut flower display.

When to Grow:

Sweet peas can be sown outdoors in April and will flower in the summer.

Growing Conditions:

Sweet peas can be grown in a large, deep container or straight into the ground. They like to grow in a sunny position and will need some kind of support such as a fence or a wigwam-shaped bamboo frame to climb up.

How to Grow:

- 1 Soak your sweet pea seeds for a few hours in warm water before planting. This helps to break down the hard seed coat.
- 2 If you are planting your sweet pea seeds directly into the ground, you will need to add compost to the soil several weeks before planting. Remove any weeds and rake the soil until it is fine and crumbly.
- 3 If planting in a pot or container, choose a tall pot so that the sweet pea roots have plenty of space to grow downwards. Fill your plant pot with compost.
- 4 Use a stick or your finger to make small holes in the soil about 1cm deep with a 3cm gap between each hole. Place 1 seed in each hole and cover with 1cm of compost. Lightly water the seeds.
- 5 Push some bamboo canes into the soil or pot to form a wigwam which will support the sweet peas.
- 6 Cover the pots with clear polythene and place them in a warm spot, keeping the compost moist. Remove the polythene when the seeds germinate.
- 7 As the plants grow, wind the tendrils around the supports or loosely tie them with string.

Did You Know...?

Sweet peas are not the same as other garden peas. No part of the sweet pea plant should be eaten as they are not edible and are mildly toxic.

Marigolds



Marigolds are fast-growing plants and are very easy to grow from seed. Their bright yellow and orange petals will really brighten up your garden in the summer.

When to Grow:

Marigolds can be sown outdoors between March and May and will flower from summer to autumn.

Growing Conditions:

Marigolds can be grown in a large pot or in the ground. They like to grow in full sun in well-drained soil.

How to Grow:

- 1 Fill your plant pot with seed compost. If you are planting your marigold seeds directly into the ground, remove any weeds and rake the soil until it is fine and crumbly.
- 2 Use a stick or your finger to make some small holes in the soil about 12mm deep.
- 3 Sprinkle the marigold seeds into the holes and cover them with soil or compost.
- 4 Gently water the seeds.
- 5 You may need to thin out the seedlings as they grow to prevent overcrowding.

Did You Know...?

Marigold petals and leaves are edible! They have a citrus taste and can be added to salads and sandwiches in small amounts.

Outdoor areas provide great opportunities for play and learning, but always check for any environmental risks before taking part in outdoor activities, and only proceed if it is safe to do so. Ensure children always wash their hands after being outside. Please be respectful of nature and take care of animals and plants. We will not be held responsible for the health and safety of those participating in activities, and cannot accept any liability. By organising or participating in any activity described, you acknowledge that it is the responsibility of supervising adults to ensure the safety of children in their care.