

SUNFLOWERS

Sunflowers get their name from the way they turn to face the sun as it goes across the sky each day. You can grow your own from seeds.

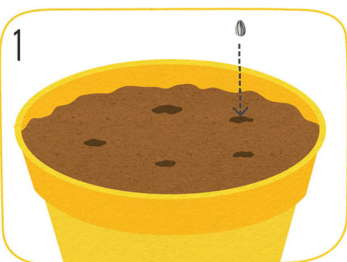
SOW:
MARCH TO MAY

FLOWERS:
JULY TO SEPTEMBER

SITE:
OUTSIDE SUNNY

YOU WILL NEED:

- ★ 5 seeds from a dwarf sunflower variety such as Choc Chip, Aslan, Teddy Bear or Irish Eyes
- ★ a plant pot at least 50cm (20in) wide, filled with multi-purpose compost
- ★ a pencil



Use the pencil to poke five holes in the compost, evenly spaced in a ring. Each hole should be around 5cm (2in) deep. Drop a seed into each hole. Sprinkle over a little more compost. Water well.



Put the pot in a sunny place outside. Check the compost every few days and water it if it feels dry. In two weeks, you should see tiny green seedlings.



Pull out the smaller, weaker seedlings, to leave the three strongest ones in the pot. Keep on watering every few days. In a few more weeks, flower buds should appear.



POTENTIAL PESTS

See the tips on page 58 to keep slugs and snails off your sunflowers. To deter pests such as aphids, try growing chervil or chives nearby as 'companion plants' – see pages 52-53 to find out more.

The flower buds will get bigger and then open into sunflowers.

In the middle of the flower you might be able to see sunflower seeds developing.

When the flowers die, leave them on the plant. As the flowers dry out, the seeds will ripen.

Keep on watering your sunflowers whenever the compost feels dry. Stop when all the flowers have died.

You could collect some seeds and keep them for planting next year. Leave the rest as a snack for garden birds.

