

Sunflower

Helianthus annuus · Daisy family

DIFFICULTY Easy

TYPE Annual, direct sown, warm season

MATURITY 80–120 days



SUN
Full sun



WATER
Moderate,
drought-tolerant
once established



SOIL PH
6.0–7.5



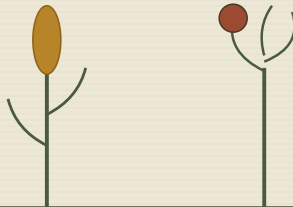
SPACING
30–45cm



DEPTH
2–3cm

01 Grown for seed and oil

Beyond a cheerful garden feature, sunflower heads produce a substantial crop of seed for eating, oil pressing, or poultry feed — a genuinely useful homestead crop.



tall stalk crop, sown in rows or blocks

02 Planting

METHOD	Direct sow once frost risk has passed.
SOIL	Well-drained, tolerates a range of soils.
TIMING	Sow in spring.

04 Problems

- **Birds** — will strip a ripening head quickly; net if harvesting for yourself.
- **Powdery mildew** — late-season on leaves; largely cosmetic.
- **Stem lodging** — wind damage on tall varieties; stake if exposed.
- **Few significant pests otherwise** — a generally easy crop.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY	AVOID NEARBY	ROTATION NOTE
Cucumber Corn	Potato (some allelopathic effect)	Rotate with legumes; heavy feeder.

03 Growing care

- Water regularly while establishing, then reduce — deep roots find their own moisture.
- Stake very tall varieties in windy positions.
- Protect developing seed heads from birds if you want to harvest seed yourself.
- Support heavy heads if needed as seed fills.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Back of the head turns brown/yellow, seeds are plump and firm.
METHOD	Cut the whole head, hang to finish drying.
CURING	Dry heads fully before rubbing out seed.
STORAGE	Airtight, cool, dark — keeps many months.