



**Teddy Bear Dwarf Sunflower:** an attractive, double-flowered ornamental with yellow to light orange blooms on compact three-foot plants.



**Fast Facts:**

Annual: will grow for one long season, may live into autumn, but will die when the cold winter begins.

Germination: time it takes for the seed to sprout = 14 days

Matures: 59 days, should produce flowers eight weeks after they have been planted.

Prefers 70-degree weather and full sun.

Space 12 – 18 inches apart

As the stem grows, use twine or soft ties to secure it to a stake every six inches or so.

A good choice for Companion Planting – to support climbing bean plant and/or squash uses the shade from the sunflower to keep from getting scorched by the sun, and the beans and squashes shade the soil which help the sunflower retain moisture.



### **How to Sow:**

Sow two seeds, one inch deep, in your newspaper pot. You need to keep the soil moist but not waterlogged. If the seeds are watered too much, they will rot.

Keep your seed-starting tray on a sunny windowsill. You might need to rotate the seed-starting container so that the seedlings grow straight, instead of curving towards the sun.

Thin the seedlings once they have set “true leaves” (normal size leaves for a Sunflower plant), keeping the strongest one in each pot. Transplant them when the seedlings are about three to four inches tall.



### **Harden them off:**

Reduce the frequency of watering to slow plant growth, but don't allow plants to wilt. You need to harden off your indoor seedlings before planting them outside. If you don't, they may suffer shock from the brutal sun. Without the opportunity to adjust first, they could sunburn and might even die.

When the seedlings have two sets of leaves, begin hardening them off. Take pots outside on warm days and bring back in at night. Continue this for a week to get the plants used to the conditions outdoors. After that, plant them in prepared soil.



**Plant:**

After about seven days to “harden off” your seedlings, carefully cut off the bottom of each paper pot. Find a location that gets at least six to eight hours of full sun every day and has rich, well-draining soil. Dig a hole approximately two inches deeper and two inches wider than your newspaper pot. Place some of the loose soil back in the bottom of the hole. Pour about one-half cup of water in the hole. Place pot (with the bottom trimmed off) in the center of the hole so that the surface of the soil in the pot is even or a little lower than the surrounding soil. Fill around the pot with soil dug from the hole. Press in place. Water the surface of the soil. Watch it grow. Water just the soil when the soil surface is dry.

If you have more than one plant, space each hole about two inches apart.

To keep your blooms strong for their summer growth, water them once or twice a week, depending upon how much it rains.

To check the soil for moisture, stick your finger into the soil about one inch down. If you do not feel anything wet, give the plants about an inch of water.

Pinch the tops when they have four to five sets of “true leaves” (normal size leaves for a Sunflower plant) to encourage bushy growth and multiple flower heads. *This procedure is optional.*

Your plant will still produce more than one flower. Pinching them back may increase the number of flowers per plant.



### **Harvest:**

*Harvest seeds* after most of the flower petals have died and dropped off. Then, cut off the seed heads and about two inches of stem.

*To save seeds* for planting next summer, store dried (not roasted) seeds in a brown paper bag. They will remain viable for up to seven years.

*If you plan to eat most of your seeds*, here are a few important points to remember:

- Raw, unshelled seeds can last in the pantry for 2-3 months, or in the fridge or freezer for up to one year.
- Roasted, shelled seeds last for 3-4 months in the pantry, and up to a year in the fridge or freezer.
- Roasted, unshelled seeds last for 4-5 months in the pantry, and up to a year in the fridge or freezer.

