

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



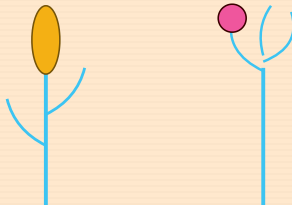
SPACING
30–45cm



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 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.

Planting timing varies significantly by Australian climate zone. Set your zone above (or use the Find My Climate Zone tool) for guidance tailored to your own area.

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

Cucumber

Corn

AVOID NEARBY

Potato (some allelopathic effect)

ROTATION NOTE

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.
PRESERVING	See Dehydrating (drying grains fully for storage) for ways to keep a harvest surplus.