

Start a Sunflower race



Challenge your family or friends to grow the tallest sunflowers.

What you need

- Sunflower seeds, ideally of a tall variety
- 7.5cm pots
- Soil
- Water
- Plastic bag
- Garden or larger plant pot
- Tomato feed
- Stake
- String

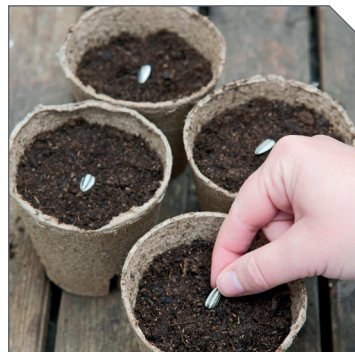


How does it work?

Sunflowers start their lives as tiny seeds. When they have enough water, warmth and light the seeds start to sprout roots. This process is known as germination. Covering your sunflower seed with a plastic bag puts it inside a mini-greenhouse, keeping a constant moisture level and trapping heat. Sunflowers make their own food by a process called photosynthesis, which captures the Sun's energy and combines it with water, nutrients and carbon dioxide to make sugar and oxygen. This happens in the leaves with the help of a special green substance called chlorophyll. The sugar helps the plant to grow and the oxygen is released back into the air. As the sunflower grows, it will be strong enough to be planted outside in a garden or a larger plant pot.



1 Find a friend or sibling who wants to race. Then, pick a variety of sunflower that will grow tall. "Russian Giants" (*Helianthus annuus*) can reach three metres high.



2 Put soil into each plant pot then push a seed 1.5 centimetres under the surface. Water the soil then cover the pot with a plastic bag and leave it in a bright place.



3 Once the sunflowers have started to grow, gently take them out of the pot and plant them in a garden or larger pot. Sprinkle on some tomato feed and water daily.



TOP TIP
Plant one sunflower in full sun and one in shade – which one grows the tallest?

4 When the sunflowers get tall you might need to tie them to a stake. Measure your tallest plant and compare it to your friends' flowers. Please send us your pictures!

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