



GROWING Sunflower Challenge



Grow a small one, grow a tall one. Growing sunflowers is easy and fun! Here at Earth's Birthday Project, our job is to inspire wonder, learning and care for our Earth. We developed the *Sunflower Challenge* to give students hands-on learning about plants. Visit our website for more ideas and free activities related to your sunflowers!

Instructions

1. Gather seed containers. You can use small paper cups, egg cartons, seed trays, seed plugs or small "cups" made from folded newspaper. Fill each one about $\frac{2}{3}$ full with potting soil or seed starting mix. Place a seed in each cup. Push the seed down into the soil about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch and cover over. If you are using clear plastic cups, place the seed at the side of the cup and push it down along the inside surface. You'll be able to watch roots and leaves develop right through the cup.
2. Keep your seeds moist. Water them by using a spray bottle, mister or a watering can with a diffuser spout. A direct pour of water from a cup or can will cause the seed and soil to move around. Give them enough water to keep the soil moist but not so much that there is water standing at the bottom of the container.
3. Place seed containers in a safe location where they can receive lots of light but won't be moved or knocked over easily.
4. Depending on the classroom temperature, your sunflowers should germinate (start to grow) and show their first leaves in just 3–10 days. Keep them happy, healthy and growing in your classroom until after the last frost date in your area. Then transplant them to a new home in the ground or a pot outside, where they can grow to their full height. Sunflowers do best in a sunny location, when temperatures are warm and days are long.

5. Send home a seed packet and *A Note to Families* (see reverse side) with each child in your classroom. They can participate in the *Sunflower Challenge* at home by growing their own sunflowers and sending in a picture when their flowers bloom.

Classroom Activities

Find more sunflower activities for your classroom at EarthsBirthday.org:

- Easy experiments with sunflower sprouts
- Flower songs and art activities
- Sprout observation activity with handout

Frequently Asked Questions

What's the prize? Students receive something from our treasure trove of earth-friendly gifts.

Can I do this activity at school? Yes! Grow a small field of flowers in your school yard and take a picture of each student next to the blooming plant they nurtured. Mail, email or fax the photos with a list of student names, and Earth's Birthday Project will send prizes for you to distribute.

What do you do with the photos? We save them for a few years in our archives to document the activity for our auditors, and then we destroy them. We do not publish them without written permission from parents.

Where do I send the photos?

Address: **Earth's Birthday Project**

PO Box 1536

Santa Fe, NM 87504-1536

Email: **info@EarthsBirthday.org**

Fax: **505-984-9176**



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A Note to Families

Grow a small one, grow a tall one. Growing sunflowers is easy and fun! Here at Earth's Birthday Project, our job is to inspire wonder, learning and care for our Earth. Planting seeds and caring for plants as they sprout, grow and flower is a wonderful opportunity for hands-on learning. We invite you and your child to take the **Sunflower Challenge**: Grow a sunflower and win a prize!

1. Plant sunflower seeds at home in your yard or in a big flower pot.
2. Care for sunflower plants as they sprout and grow. When your first flowers bloom, take a picture of yourself with them.
3. Send the photo, along with name and mailing address to
Earths Birthday Project
PO Box 1536
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1536
OR
Email a digital photo along with your mailing address to info@EarthsBirthday.org
4. Two to four weeks later, check your mailbox! Earth's Birthday Project will mail a special surprise to everyone who sends in a photo. It's our way of saying "Thank you!" for growing and caring for these beautiful flowers.

Please note: We cannot return photographs. If you would like to see your child's photo in the Sunflower Gallery at EarthsBirthday.org, please download, sign and send in the permission slip available on our website at EarthsBirthday.org. You can send it to us via regular mail, email or fax.

Family Math and Science Activities

Before you plant your seeds, count their stripes.
Do all your seeds have the same number of stripes?
Which seed has the most stripes and which has the least?

If you have a magnifying glass, look at the stripes close up.
How would you describe them as you see them enlarged?

Sprout a seed by placing it on a dish with a wet paper towel—not too wet!
Keep the towel moist for several days.
Describe what happens day by day.

For more sunflower-related activities, visit our website at www.EarthsBirthday.org.