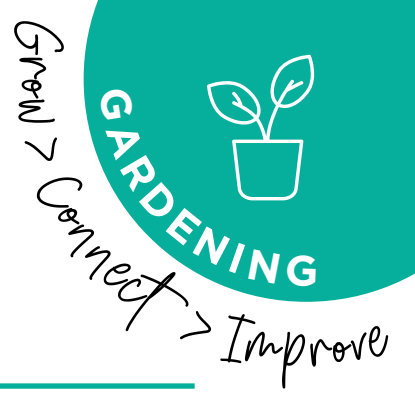




Week Twenty Two



Growing Sunflowers in Victoria

"Golden Paddock" by Denise Tyrie, Peninsula Belles Branch



I think it is fair to say we have all seen the beautiful fields of sunflowers floating in the breeze.

But can we grow these bright happy flowers in the cooler southern climate at home? From what I understand sunflowers are easy plants to grow, just pop in the ground water. Once they emerge, give them some liquid feed to boost their height and 10-12 weeks later there should be flowers

About Sunflowers

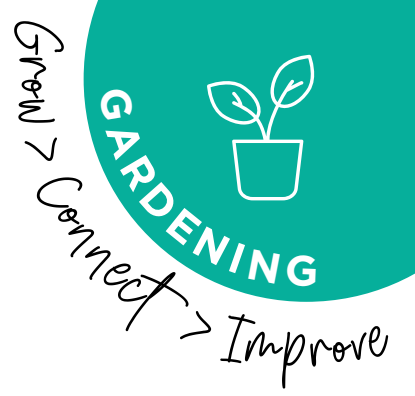
Sunflowers are an important crop throughout the world. Their origins are North American however now the Ukraine and Russian Federation are two of the largest sunflower producers: they produce almost 50% of the world's sunflower production. According to ABARES (Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences) Australian crop report in 2019-20 Australia's production was 24,000 tonnes of Sunflowers.

Sunflowers are one of the faster growing plants. They attract birds to your garden and they are great food for poultry and other stock.

Sunflowers produce sunflowers seeds that are used to produce edible oil and fruits for human and livestock consumption. They are good for soil health and it is understood that sunflowers can absorb toxic metals and remediate contaminated soil.



Week Twenty Two



Other uses for Sunflowers

- Roasted whole Sunflower seeds
- Bird seed
- Sunflower oil
- Sunflower seed flour
- The leaves are edible and can be used in salads and stir-fries.
- The fibres from the stem can be made into fabric and paper.

So let's see if we can grow these majestic flowers...I have been to my local nursery and purchased some seeds and a seed kit to help with the germination.

From all that I have read, these are the key points:

- Sunflowers can grow in cool temperate regions – they just need to be sown in Spring after the last frost.
- They take 10-12 weeks to grow and must be planted 60cm apart & 2cm deep.
- Sunflowers require planting in full sun with protection from winds. They need 6-8 hours of sunlight per day
- They also need deep regular watering: this encourages the root growth and a large healthy bloom.
- Water or foliar feed in the morning so foliage is dry before sunset, this reduces the risk of fungal moulds and rots.
- Slugs and snails love sunflower seedlings, so protect them with certified snail bait or make your own mixing 1 part espresso coffee to 3 parts water.
- Bees love sunflowers; they also attract birds and butterflies.

Here are my pictures so far, and if all else fails I suggest visiting Pick your own sunflowers in Dunnstown near Ballarat for their opening in February-March 2021.

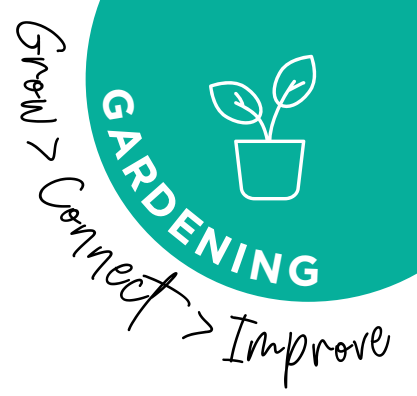
<https://www.pickyourownsunflowers.com/>

Photo: Jenni Turnbull, Beulah Branch





Week Twenty Two





Week Twenty Two

