



PLANT FACT SHEET

Helianthus annuus L.

GENUS *Helianthus* FAMILY Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Sunflower

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Flowers, Spice, Oil, Root - tea

An edible oil is extracted from the seeds and used for cooking.

Sometimes seeds are eaten raw or roasted.

The seeds can be ground into a meal for using in bread and cakes.

They are also dried, roasted and ground and used as a coffee substitute.

The seeds are boiled with water and honey to make a drink.

The germinated seeds are fermented into a yogurt or cheese.

The young flower buds are steamed and served like globe artichokes.

DESCRIPTION

An upright annual plant. It varies in height from 1-4 m. It has a strong tap root. Plants are mostly unbranched but may have some branches. The stems are hairy. The leaves are large and oval to heart shaped. They have teeth around the edges. They are roughly hairy and mid to dark green. Leaves can be 10-40 cm long by 5-20 cm wide. The leaf stalk is long. The flowers are yellow and daisy like. Flowers are 9-20 cm across. Sometimes they are tinged red or purple.

HABITAT

A temperate plant. It suits the highlands of the tropics and can stand a light frost. It needs a well drained soil. It prefers a rich soil. It is drought and frost resistant. Sunflowers grow from the equator to 55°N latitude. They do not suit the wet tropics. They cannot tolerate very acid soils. It can grow in arid places. In Hobart Botanical gardens. In Nepal it grows up to 600 m altitude. It suits hardiness zones 4-11. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Only well filled seed should be planted. It is easy to save your own seed. Dry seed stores well. It will grow on most soils. A plant spacing of 1 m by 0.5 m is suitable. Seed are sown at a depth of 2-4 cm. At maturity heads are collected by hand and dried then threshed.

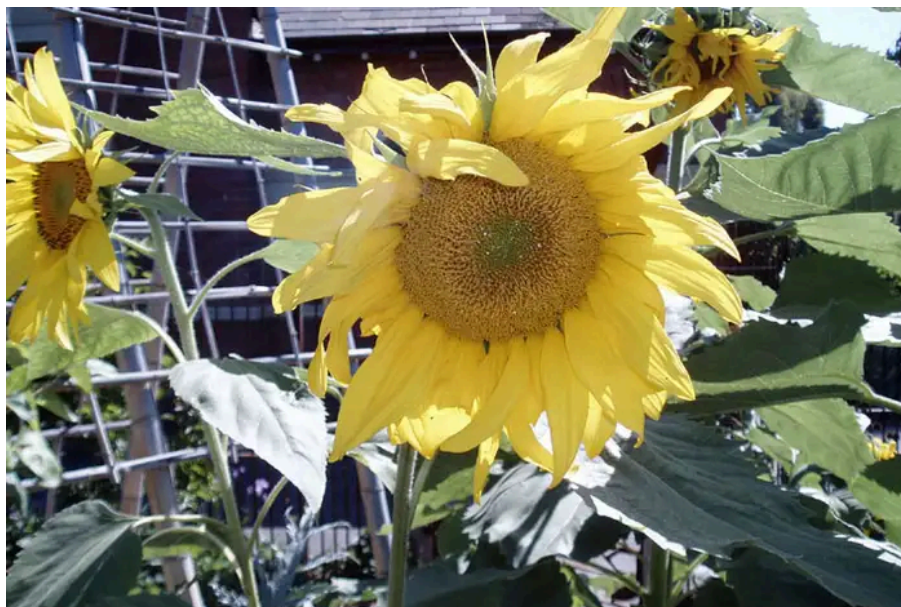
Harvesting and Seed Production

Time to maturity is usually 4-5 months. Seeds are ready to eat when the flower starts to wither.

NOTES

Almost all *Helianthus* (70 species) in N and S America are edible. Elias, T.S. & Dykeman P.A., 1990, *Edible Wild Plants. A North American Field guide*. Sterling, New York p 156

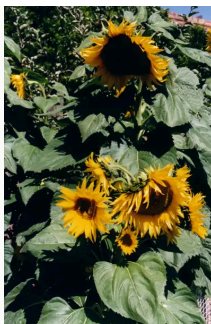
PICTURES



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