

Purple Flowers Gardens & Mosaics

Grow your own cutflowers' plan

This easy plan will help you grow hand-tied flower bouquets from your own garden from June till October. It'll take up about 3m² in your garden or allotment and it will cost around £25, depending on the seed packets you buy and what material you already have at home. You will also need some recycled household waste like loo rolls and mushroom tubs. You can use foliage and flowers that you have in your existing borders such as St John's wort, roses and hydrangeas to add to your bouquets.



Growing your own cutflowers is not only great for you but also for the environment. The cutflowers that you buy in shops may have travelled quite a bit, some even by plane, are wrapped in plastic and their production involved several insecticides and other harmful chemicals. Plus many of the flowers that you'll grow are great for bees and other pollinators.

Below you'll find the complete plan

- Layout of the 3m² bed
- Flowers in the plan
- Time schedule
- Equipment needed
- Recycling material to collect

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The layout of the 3m² bed

Your flowerbed needs to be in full sun. If it is shaded most flowers will perform poorly.
North

Sweet Pea teepee		3 x dahlia			
		Sunflower x 6 & euphorbias (or Burpleurum)			
Nigella sown in May	Euphorbia or Burpleurum	Nigella sown in April	Salvia Viridis	Cosmos	Nigella sown in March / Rudbeckia
Calendula sown in May		Calendula sown in April			Calendula sown in March / Rudbeckia
Cornflowers sown in May		Cornflowers sown in April			Cornflowers sown in March / Rudbeckia

Flowers in the plan & seed packets to buy

Dahlia Make sure that you do not buy dwarf dahlia's but that they will be at least 2ft/50-60cm high. You also may not want to buy dinner plate dahlias as they will be too big for bouquets.
These are the only perennials in the plan, which are easy to grow from seeds, but if you prefer, you could also buy 3 tubers.

Sweetpeas
Sunflower
Cornflower
Nigella
Cosmos
Rudbeckia
Euphorbia Oblongata or Burpleurum
Calendula
Salvia Viridis Blue Monday

There are very many options with regards to colours. Either chose mixes and if you prefer to buy single colour seeds, then make sure that the colours of the various seed packets match, so they will also match in your bouquets.

The seeds are for sale at good garden centres but it may also be worth buying these online. Check out Higgledygarden.com (p&p free over £15), Sarah Raven, Suttons, Thompson & Morgan, Chiltern Seeds, King's Seeds or any other online seed retailers.

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Time schedule

Date to sow (two days before full moon)		7-Feb	7-Mar	6-Apr	5-May	3-Jun	3-Jul
There is some evidence that sowing with the moon is more successful, but obviously do not sow outside if it is too wet or too cold.		In February and March, prepare your seed beds: dig out any perennial weeds and add (peatfree if bought) compost or manure.					
1	Dahlia **S		Sow 6 seeds on windowsill in pots	Transplant 3 strong seedlings into bigger pots when large enough to handle	Harden off & plant out after middle of May		
2	Sweetpeas **	Soak seeds overnight & sow 3 seeds each in 8 pots or loo rolls	Thin to the strongest seedling. When seedlings are about 10-15cm, pinch out tips to encourage branching.	When roots have filled up the pots, harden off* and plant out, one near each cane. Tie in plants.			
3	Sunflower **S		Sow 3 seeds each in 6 pots or loo rolls	When they have a set of true leaves, thin to the strongest seedling.	Harden off & plant out when the plants are large enough		
4	Cornflower D		Sow small row outside	Sow small row outside	Sow small row outside		
5	Nigella D		Sow small row outside	Sow small row outside	Sow small row outside		
6	Cosmos **		Sow 8 seeds inside	Transplant 5 strong seedlings, into larger pots. Pinch out tips to encourage bushier plants	Harden off and plant outside when large enough		

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Date to sow (two days before full moon)		7-Feb	7-Mar	6-Apr	5-May	3-Jun	3-Jul
7	Rudbeckia				Sow 10 seeds in a propagator outside	Transplant first in small pots	Plant out when large enough
8	Euphorbia or or Burpleurum ***	Sow 8 seeds in pots	Transplant 4 of the strongest seedlings. Sow another 5 seeds in pots	Harden off & plant out first 4 euphorbias. Transplant another 3. Sow directly (see below for guide)	Plant out 3 euphorbias near the sunflowers & sow direct some direct near half of the sunflowers	Take care cutting Euphorbia as the white milk can irritate your skin, so wear gloves. Sear stems in hot boiled water for 30 seconds	
9	Calendula		Sow small row outside	Sow small row outside	Sow small row outside		
10	Salvia Viridis Blue Monday**D		Sow 10 seeds inside	Transplant 5 strong seedlings in pots	Plant out		

* Hardening off: When you raise plants indoors they need to get adapted to both wind and lower temperatures. You can do this by putting the plants out during the day for a period of 10 to 14 days. Alternatively you can put the plants outside and cover them in fleece or give them some protection otherwise. If you don't acclimatise them, they will suffer a shock and stop growing.

** Deadhead to prolong flowering (unless of course you pick all flowers!)

*** For a good guide to sowing burpleurum, please visit <https://higgledygarden.com/2012/10/05/how-to-grow-bupleurum/>

S Needs support such as a bamboo cane and regular tying in with twine

D These can also be cut for drying for winter use. A great guide on how to dry cornflowers can be found here: <https://higgledygarden.com/2012/05/09/how-to-dry-cornflowers-g/>

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Equipment needed

Garden twine

8 long bamboo canes (2m) or strong sticks (ie willow/hazel)

9 x medium bamboo canes (around 1.5m) or strong sticks

Peatfree (seed sowing) compost.

- If you use your own, sieve it and it may be worth putting it in the microwave for a minute or so, to kill any existing weed seeds (but make sure you don't accidentally put any worms or any other insects in the microwave)
- There are only a few peatfree seed sowing composts on the market such as GroChar and Dalefoot. You can experiment with an ordinary peatfree compost by sieving it and making sure you remove any lumps, so you end up with a very fine mixture.

Reuse

- 14 loo rolls

- containers such as ones that held mushrooms or a butter tub or anything similar to hold the loo rolls without any holes

- 10 or more small (or large) plastic bottles or anything else that can be put on top of the bamboo canes to protect your eyes if you bend over (ie yakult pots/small drinks bottles/old small balls, etc.)

- small pots, around 20.*

- 4 larger pots*

- plastic bags to use as makeshift propagators

* Some garden centres provide a space for customers to recycle their pots. If you live near Cambridge, then Scotsdales in Great Shelford has such a point.

Cutting your flowers

Try to cut your flowers when they are just open. Especially dahlias need to be open before you cut them as they will not bloom in a vase when still in bud. Try to immediately put your cut flowers in water, or even better go out in the garden with your secateurs and a bucket of water to put them in.

You may find that your own flowers are not as long as the flowers that you buy in the shop, so your smaller vases will likely get a lot of use. Spice jars are great for sweetpeas and are good for putting flowers on the table when you have a dinner party.

Mix your cutflowers with other flowers and foliage that you have in your garden. If you find that your flowers wilt, try searing the stems. Boil some water, wait a minute and hold the stems in the hot water for about 30 seconds.



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