

Example Packets



What you will need

- Johnsons seeds
- A garden spade or fork
- A rake
- Seed tray and lid
- Compost



Johnsons
GROWING WITH CONFIDENCE SINCE 1820

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GROWING WITH CONFIDENCE SINCE 1820
A quick guide to

FREE



The benefits of growing from seed

The satisfaction of raising your own plants from seed is immense. There is enormous pleasure in simply knowing that the flowers you enjoy are all the result of your own handiwork.

There are also incredible savings to be made, in most cases a great number of plants can be raised for the relatively small cost of a packet of seeds. Often there is a large number of seeds in a packet which allows for repeat sowing. In many cases the consecutive sowing of flowers will give the longest possible flowering season for maximum enjoyment. Plants bought in a tray from a garden centre will all have been sown at the same time and often flower all together in a short lived display.

Raising your own plants from seed also gives them the chance to adapt to the local conditions as they develop, and with the greater care that can be given at home, will often result in healthier plants that perform better for longer.



One of the other great joys of growing from seed is being able to share or swap any surplus plants with neighbours and fellow gardeners. It's a wonderful way to meet new people, discuss techniques and experiences and discover great new varieties.



Hints and Tips

- For many plants the regular removal of dead flower heads will help to ensure the longest possible flowering season, however leaving some in place will provide seed to feed birds and hardy plants will have the opportunity to drop seed, providing more flowers the following year.
- Sowing seed in curved rows or a number of parallel rows to create larger drifts will give a more pleasing natural effect.
- Check the seed packet to make sure you sow at the correct depth.
- Young plants that are thinned out needn't be discarded, if handled

carefully they can be replanted elsewhere.

- After thinning out, water plants well to wash dislodged soil back around the roots of the remaining plants.
- Do not allow plants to dry out and do not over water. The soil should be moist but not wet.
- To get the best displays, feed flowers when the buds begin to appear with a liquid feed.
- Cut flowers are best picked when the buds are just beginning to show colour.
- Set aside an inconspicuous area of the garden dedicated to growing cut flowers, then they can be picked without spoiling your ornamental flowerbed displays.
- Grow fragrant flowers near the house, patio or paths where the scent can be appreciated more easily.
- Mix very fine seeds with a little sand to make sowing easier.
- Once established, most mature perennials can be divided in the autumn or spring.



Annual & Perennial Flowers

The term **annual** is used to describe short lived plants, whose entire life-cycle; germinating from seed, to flowering and setting more seed for future generations, takes place within a year. **Perennial** describes longer lived plants which flower and set seed repeatedly year after year. Another common group of plants are those described as **biennial**, where the life-cycle takes place over two years, these tend to flower and set seed only in their second year after which they die back.

Plants referred to as hardy will survive the cold winter temperatures in the UK. Half hardy plants will not survive winter, because of this most half hardy annuals and half hardy perennials are simply treated as annuals that need to be re-sown every year. Most half hardy plants need to be sown indoors in the UK as they require an early start to give them the long growing season their warmer native climate would usually provide.



Where

Many annual and perennial flowers are easily sown directly into a well prepared seed bed in their flowering position. The seed packets indicate where they will thrive, whether it is an open sunny location or dappled shade. Some are best sown indoors, into trays or small pots of seed compost, often these plants are less hardy so this method allows them to get an early start and be protected until the

weather has warmed up and they are large enough to be planted out. Varieties with very small or expensive seeds are also best sown in pots or trays, either outside or indoors. This way they are easier to keep an eye on until they are large enough to plant out into the garden.

How

Before sowing outdoors, the soil should be dug over and raked to a fine consistency. Seeds need to be sown thinly, in rows at the distance indicated on the seed packet. It is best to sow in rows so that it is easier to identify the seedlings as they emerge. The seeds should be lightly covered with fine soil and watered gently so they are not disturbed. When sowing indoors make certain the pots and trays are clean and be sure to use fresh seed compost to avoid importing pests, diseases and the unwanted seeds of weeds. To aid germination the trays should be kept at the temperature indicated on the packet and covered with glass, polythene or a propagator lid to help keep the compost moist. The cover should be removed when

the seedlings appear. To extend the flowering season for annual varieties it is best to make repeat sowings at 2 or 3 week intervals. Don't forget to use your free Johnsons seeds label to identify the variety sown.

Care

Once seedlings sown outdoors are large enough to handle they need to be thinned out to the spacing indicated on the packet. It is best to remove the weaker seedlings leaving the stronger ones the room they need to grow on. This also improves air circulation around the seedlings, reducing the chance of disease. The soil needs to be kept moist (but not wet) and weed free. Seedlings raised indoors should be carefully transplanted to further pots or trays when they're large enough to handle. Always hold seedlings by a leaf so you don't risk crushing the stem. They can then grow on until they are large enough to plant out. Before planting out young plants must be acclimatised to outside conditions by being placed in a sheltered location for a few hours during the day, the time



the first year bulking up in order to flower the following year and then repeatedly for many years to come. However there are also first year flowering perennials which flower from their very first summer onwards if sown early enough. For most plants the regular removal of dead flower heads will help to ensure the longest possible flowering season.



spent outside should gradually be increased over the next two weeks (avoid frosts). They can then be planted out to their final growing position at the spacing indicated on the packet.

Flowering

Annual varieties will flower vigorously the same year they are sown and then die back once their life-cycle is complete. Many half hardy annuals and perennials can continue to flower until the weather turns cold in the autumn. Hardy perennial varieties tend to spend

Please see the back of the seed packets for more specific growing instructions.

