

Super Sunflowers

Learning objectives:

To learn about the life cycle of a sunflower.

To be curious about growing.

Observation and language skills as the sunflower changes.





Practitioner knowledge:

The common sunflower typically grows and flowers within about 100 days.

As it develops, the flower head tracks the movement of the sun across the sky, helping to maximise growth.

Sunflowers are an important crop, producing edible seeds and oil, and they have been cultivated by humans for thousands of years.

They also play a vital role in supporting wildlife: their bright flowers attract pollinators such as bees, while their seeds provide a valuable food source for birds. In addition, sunflowers can improve soil health by helping to remove certain toxins, and their deep roots make them particularly strong and resilient in windy conditions.



Resources you will need:

Sunflower lifeline sequencing cards.





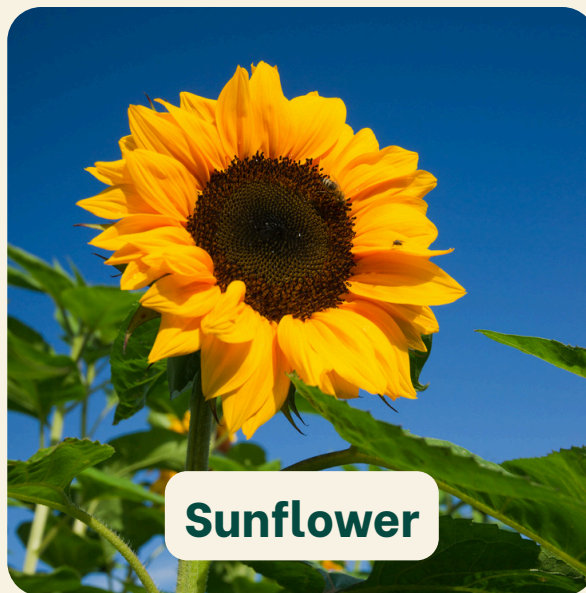
Seed



Sprout



Plant



Sunflower



Seed head

Activity:

Cut out the cards and encourage the children to think about the correct order they should be arranged in.

Top tip:

To maximise engagement, add some yoga moves for each stage.

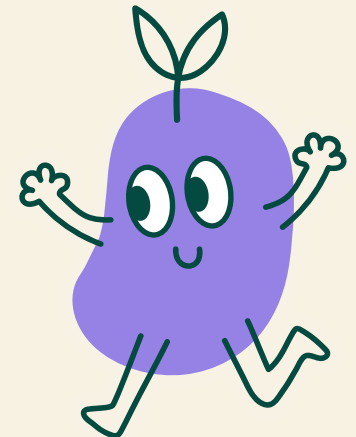
Seed – the children can be small, crouched on the ground.

Sprout – still crouched but holding hands above the head, maybe a finger from each hand pretending to be little leaves.

Plant – standing up holding hands out to show the leaves

Flower – stretched tall with hands in a circle to be the flower.
They could also follow the sun.

Seed head – arms drop to their side as the seeds are now heavy.



Let's get growing!

Why not grow your own sunflowers in your setting, giving children invaluable, practical learning opportunities?

Once the flower has reached the seed head stage, you can use those fine motor and concentration skills to extract the seeds with tweezers and re-plant the seeds and watch the process all over again! This gives the children incredible hands-on experience of the complete life cycle in a meaningful way.

Why not keep track of the wildlife your sunflower is helping?

Count how many bees, birds or butterflies stop by. You could even draw the wildlife in chalk on the ground and keep a tally by adding a line each time you spot one.

Get creative!

Take some paints, chalk or crayons outside and use a sunflower as a model.

Children could paint with their fingers or a fork to create the petals, and a fingertip or end of a paintbrush to make the brown dotted centre. Let the sunflower guide the curiosity and exploration.



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