

FROM SEED TO BOUQUET

Your Beginner
Cut Flower Garden
Workbook



Your guide to growing a thriving cut flower garden with zinnias, cosmos, and sunflowers featuring step-by-step tips, spacious documentation pages, and interactive worksheets to help you plant, nurture, and harvest beautiful blooms all season long.

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Welcome, Flower Friend!



I am so glad you are interested in growing a cut flower garden! I am Kara Jamison, the owner, flower farmer, educator, speaker and heart behind Blooming Joy Flower Company. I grow cut flowers on my farm in Middle Tennessee. Although I grow cut flowers using flower farming tactics, I very much love to weave a beautiful garden esthetic into my cut flower field. In this guide, I will walk you through the very three flowers I grew my first year of having a cut flower garden back in 2018. These three flowers gave me the confidence to add more and more cut flower varieties to my ever growing knowledge in this flower farming and gardening world. I truly believe starting small and starting simple encourages an in-depth learning of these three beginner friendly cut flowers. Once you really get the hang of growing these, it will be easier to add additional flowers to learn about and grow in your cut flower garden.

This workbook is designed to help you successfully grow zinnias, cosmos, and sunflowers for beautiful homegrown bouquets. Use the worksheets to plan, track, and refine your gardening skills. Always keep on growing and keep on blooming, flower friend!

Kara Jamison

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Deciding Where to Put the Garden



Choosing the right location for your cut flower garden is key to growing healthy, productive blooms. Zinnias, cosmos, and sunflowers, the flowers we are talking about in this workbook, thrive in full sun. Select a spot that gets at least 6-8 hours of direct sunlight each day. Good drainage is essential to prevent root rot. Avoid low-lying areas where water tends to collect.

Key Points:

- Full sun location or 6-8 hours of sunlight a day
- Well draining location
- Needs to be close to a water source
- Soil needs to be loose to plant in.

Your soil needs to be loose to plant the seeds in. You can accomplish this multiple ways:

- No Till Method: Lay plain brown cardboard in thick layers on grass and cover with compost.
- Till the area. Although the ground is loose quickly, grass will be a headache later in the season because it was propagated in a lot of pieces by tilling.



Understanding Frost Dates

It's better to plant Zinnias, Cosmos and Sunflowers a little later vs. a little earlier. Give them cool soil and it may stunt their growth. They love warm temperatures!



In the planting world, frost dates refer to the average dates of the last frost in spring and the first frost in fall for your specific location. These dates are crucial for gardeners because they help determine when to start seeds, transplant seedlings, and direct sow flowers or vegetables.

The last spring frost marks the time when tender plants can be safely planted outdoors without risk of freezing, while the first fall frost signals the end of the growing season for many plants.

To find your frost dates, you can use online tools like the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map or enter your zip code into a frost date calculator from sources like the Farmer's Almanac or local extension services



Why start with Zinnias, Cosmos and Sunflowers?

My #1 goal when helping others learn how to grow their first cut flower garden is to help them not feel overwhelmed. There are a zillion ways to prep a garden bed and start seeds but I truly believe in starting small and simple is the best beginner friendly advice.

Learning how to sow seeds directly in your garden bed is the easiest way to begin learning about seed starting. Starting a cut flower garden in the Spring, after your last danger of frost, is a great way to learn about this simple seed starting method to help you achieve buckets of summer blooms.

Zinnias, Cosmos and Sunflowers are fantastic first cut flower seeds to plant in your first cut flower garden because they do well sown directly in the warm ground.

Start simple. Start Small. Build foundational knowledge to help you have confidence to grow even more types of cut flowers.

3 Beginner Friendly Cut Flowers to Grow

Zinnias, cosmos, and sunflowers are some of the best flowers to start with in a cut flower garden because they are easy to grow, highly productive and incredibly rewarding. These flowers thrive in warm conditions, making them perfect for beginners who want a low-maintenance but high-impact garden. They germinate quickly, require minimal care beyond regular watering and deadheading, and bloom abundantly throughout the season.

You can also find these seeds pretty easily in many seed suppliers. Later in this mini e-book, I will give you a list of some of my fav varieties to grow and where to buy them!



3 Beginner Friendly Cut Flowers to Grow with Seeds Sown Directly in the Ground:

- 1** Zinnias: Cut and Come Again Flower with vibrant, long lasting blooms.
- 2** Cosmos: Whimsical, airy blooms that are cut and come again flowers that dance in bouquets.
- 3** Sunflowers: Bold and cheerful blooms, plant multiple successions for a steady stream of bouquets.

Growing Zinnias

- Best planted after the last frost.
- Direct sow in ground, 1/2 inch below soil surface, cover with soil. Needs darkness to germinate.
- Thin plants after sprouting to space 9 inches apart.
- Pinch young plants for more flower stems.
- Deadhead for continuous blooms.



Growing Cosmos

- Thrives in poor soil.
- Sow directly after frost, 1/2 inch below soil surface, cover with soil. Needs darkness to germinate.
- Thin plants after sprouting to space 12 inches apart
- Pinch young plants for bushier growth.
- Stake taller varieties with support netting.



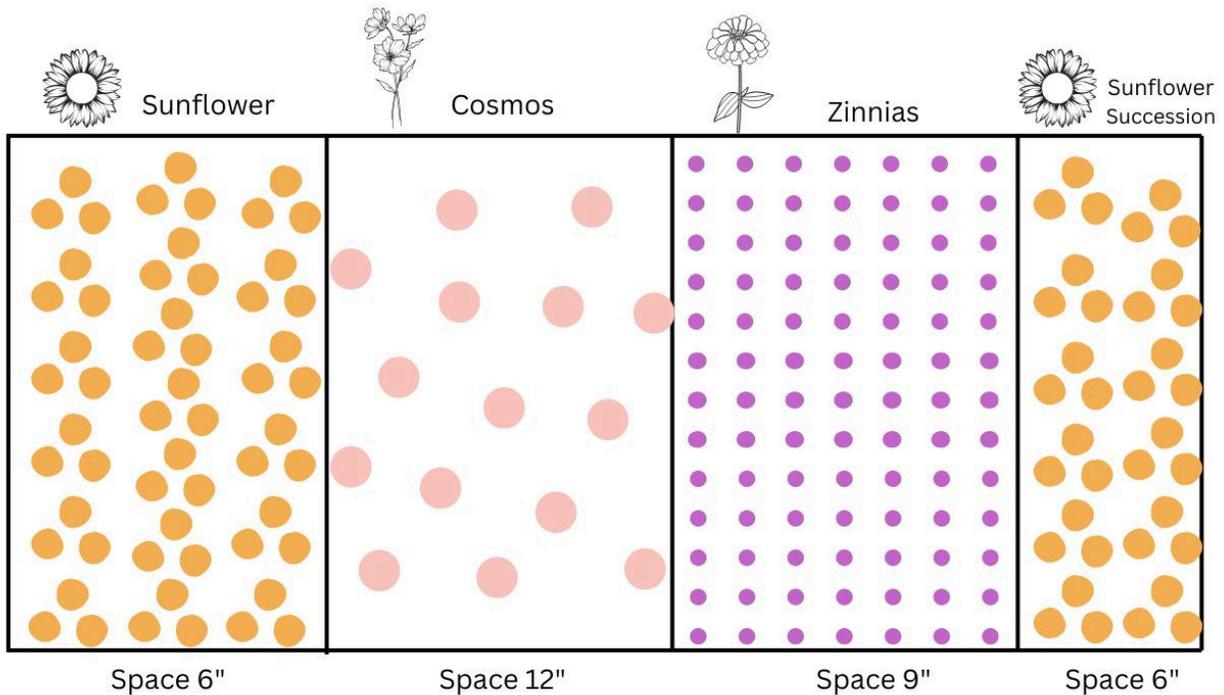
Growing Sunflowers

- Sow directly after last frost, 1/2 inch below soil surface, cover with soil. Needs darkness to germinate.
- Plant successively every 2 weeks for continuous blooms.
- Choose Pollenless varieties and branching types for more flowers per plant. Some sunflowers only produce one bloom so plant.



Pick out flower colors that match the season! Your first planting can be vibrant summer colors. A month later, sow seeds of rich, autumn fall colors for fresh seasonal bouquet colors!

Cut Flower Garden Diagram



Make beds wide enough to reach across the bed. I like to do 3ft width beds. Your pathways can be as big as needed. but the smallest I would go is 3ft otherwise, it gets hard to walk between the flowers once the mature.

Watch a YouTube video of how I plant out this cut flower garden plan
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttg9cwLBYzU!>

Flower	Direct Sow	Spacing	Days to Bloom	Cut & Come Again
Zinnias	after last frost date	9 inches	60 to 75 days	Yes
Cosmos	after last frost date	12 inches	60 to 70 days	Yes
Sunflowers	after last frost date	6 inches	50-70 days, variety specific	Branching varieties

Harvesting



Each flower has a specific way to harvest the blooms for the longest vase life. Change water every other day to help improve vase life as well.

Zinnias

Harvest zinnia in full bloom when the “neck” just under the bloom is stiff, not wobbly.

Cosmos

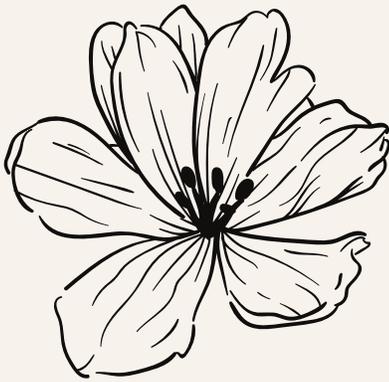
Harvest when bud is colored and loosely tight, not completely open yet.

Sunflowers

Harvest when one to two petals have opened. Flower will continue to open after harvest.

Post Harvest General Care

Keep flowers in water, fresh cut flowers from the garden take in water quickly, keep out of direct sunlight & away from produce.



Maintenance & Common Issues

I never look at a plant issue or a plant dying as a bad thing. I look at everything as learning potential to help me become an even better cut flower grower.



Maintaining zinnias, cosmos, and sunflowers is relatively easy, but they do come with a few common challenges. Regular watering, proper spacing, and deadheading spent blooms will keep these flowers thriving and encourage continuous blooms. Zinnias and cosmos can be prone to powdery mildew, especially in humid conditions, so it's important to space them properly for airflow and avoid overhead watering. Japanese beetles may also appear, but they can often be managed by handpicking and putting into a bucket of soapy water. Zinnias and Cosmos, with their tall stems, need staking or support in windy areas to prevent breakage. I use hortonova netting. Additionally, birds and squirrels love sunflower seeds, so covering young plants with netting can help protect them. With a little care and attention, these flowers can produce an abundance of blooms all season long.

Cut Flower Varieties

These are a few of my favorite cut flower varieties!



Zinnias

California Giant Blend, Giant Purple Zinnia, Queeny Lime Red, Benary's Giant Blend

Cosmos

Double Click, Rubenza, Afternoon White

Sunflowers

Look for pollenless Sunflowers for cut flowers. Pro Cut Series are great beginner ones to grow!

Cut Flower Workbook Pages to Track Your Growth

This workbook includes four helpful pages to keep your garden organized and thriving. Plan your layout with a garden diagram page, track your seed planting dates and details, and monitor your harvests with an easy-to-use tracker. Whether you're mapping out your beds or keeping notes on your blooms, these pages will help you stay on top of your growing season!

I'd love to see the flowers you grow! Send me your photos to kara@bloomingjoyflowerco.com



Key things I've found helpful over the years.

- 1** Take photos at each stage: Seedling, transplant, inclement weather, field growth and bloom. Over the years, I have referred back to these photos to help me remember!
- 2** Always label your seedlings once planted so you remember which variety is growing! I love to use a garden marker.

Cut Flower Garden Bed Planting Map



Row/Bed 1

Row/Bed 2

Row/Bed 3

Row/Bed 4

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Conclusion and Next Steps

Thank you so much for downloading this free eBook! I'm thrilled to share my love of cut flowers with you, and I hope this guide inspires you to grow your own beautiful blooms. Whether you're just starting out or expanding your garden, know that every seed you plant is a step toward something truly special. Gardening has brought so much joy and connection into my life, and I hope it does the same for you. Happy growing, and I can't wait to see what you create!



If you found this guide helpful and are interested in learning more, head over to my virtual Flower Shop to browse the E-books I've written on cut flower growing!

<https://bloomingjoyflowerco.com/flower-shop/>

Let's Connect on Social Media for more Cut Flower Fun!

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