

# Celebrate the year of the nasturtium

Grow these easy garden flowers for a splash of colour all summer long. Nasturtiums are one of the easiest garden annuals to grow for your garden. The flamboyant flowers are bold and colourful, making them an excellent choice for gardens large and small. The flowers, leaves and fresh seeds are edible and ideal for salads, garnishes and peppery accents to your summer menus.

## PERFECT FOR POTS

Nasturtiums hail from the warmer climates of central and South America and love the warmth of the sun. They thrive best in a sunny position growing in well-drained soil. Surprisingly they thrive in poorer soils, where they flower better. To encourage more foliage grow them in a nutrient rich soil or pots of multi-purpose compost.

- Nasturtium flowers are on the fiery, zingy orange, red and yellow colour spectrum and are guaranteed to add vibrant hot shades to your garden displays.
- The large, open flowers are rich in nectar and attract foraging bumblebees that climb inside the flowers in search of their rich, sweet reward. Well-

pollinated plants will set seed.

- These annual plants are prolific flowerers and will keep on flowering right up to the first frosts, when the plants will die off completely.
- Nasturtiums are low maintenance garden plants that are perfect for beginners and ideal for children to grow from seed.
- Nasturtium seeds are large and easy to handle and can be sown and grown straight into the garden soil after the last frost.
- Choose your nasturtiums according to where you want to plant and grow them. For pots and containers a compact variety is a good choice, but for hanging baskets you might want a semi-trailing nasturtium to overflow and hang down. There are also

trailing types that will clamber, create good ground cover or indeed scabble up supports and other plants.

## SUPER FOOD

The spectacular flowers add a stunning accent to summer salads and a peppery highlight to the flavours. You might even capture a tiny burst of nectar inside the flowers as you feast. But the leaves and green seeds are also edible. The young leaves can be used raw in salads; they taste a bit like watercress and added to stir-fries or used to make an alternative herb pesto. Older leaves are hotter and more peppery, but still very tasty. The young green seeds will add a peppery crunch to your menus or can be lightly pickled and used as a caper alternative.

## GROWING FROM SEED

- Nasturtiums are one of the plants that are so easy to grow from seed they are often chosen for schoolchildren. So even if you've never grown from seed, these plants are a great place to start. It literally is child's play. In fact if you've had a few nasturtium plants in the garden already the chances are you'll have a few self-sown plants the following year, because the fallen seed will grow where it lands. But for the best results it's better to choose a named variety of a flower colour that you covet and grow your own from seed. One packet will produce dozens of plants, so much so you can share the surplus with friends or donate to a charity plant sale. Follow the instructions on the seed packet for the variety you have chosen to grow.
- Nasturtiums are mostly annuals that grow, flower and set seed in the same season and are really, really easy to grow from seed. Seedlings quickly develop into strong, sturdy plants with masses of vibrant orange, red and yellow flowers.
- If you are new to growing plants from seed, or a little nervous, you may prefer to buy ready grown plants from the nursery or garden centre.
- For great value grow nasturtiums from seed. One packet will provide dozens of healthy plants with rich green foliage and bright, fiery coloured flowers.

## Step by step

- Sow three seeds into small pots of seed compost from March in a light, frost-free place such as a windowsill or porch. Use a dibber or pencil to make 1cm deep holes and drop one seed into each. Cover over with compost and keep slightly moist.
- When the seedling roots have filled the pots and start to show, re-pot them into a larger pot using fresh multi purpose compost and grow on in a frost-free greenhouse, cold frame or on a windowsill.
- Plant out into their flowering position when all risk of frost has passed.
- Feed with a high potash feed for flowering plants.
- Remove dead flower heads regularly to keep the plants flowering.



MANY VARIETIES

BEAUTIFUL COLORS