

## Zinnia

These old fashioned favorites seem to smile in the face of the sizzling sun. With our recent triple digit weather it reminded me how tough these beautiful flowers are. They come in brilliant hot colors, and many different shapes. Plus they make excellent cut flowers that last a long time in a vase, what's not to like?

**Size:** 1' - 4' depending on variety.

**Exposure:** Full sun.

**How to Plant:** You can buy six packs, but I have had better luck sowing seeds directly where they are to grow. Sow from late spring to early summer. They do not like being planted early, wait until it warms up.

**Pruning:** No pruning needed, just cut flowers to continue bloom period.

**Water needs:** Water them regularly, but if using overhead water watch out for mildew in fall when the nights get cooler. Water early so the leaves can dry before sunset.

**Soil:** Good well amended garden soil will produce the most beautiful blooms.

**Fertilizing:** Feed often and generously to promote bloom.

**Snapshot:** Zinnia's grow on long stems that don't bush out much, so plant fairly close together. They have bright green foliage that contrasts the blooms perfectly. Zinnia's come in a multitude of shapes, sizes and colors. *Z. elegans*, the common Zinnia, range from one to four feet tall in colors of magenta, purple, pink, white, salmon, red orange and lavender. Envy is a novelty type in lime green. The flower shapes are even more interesting; Dalia Flowered, Giant Cactus, and Pom Pom to name a few. These sun lovers are heat resistant and put on quite a show during the hot summer months. However, they are prone to mildew so make sure they have good air circulation and some say to use soaker hose instead of over head watering.

**Novella Springer**  
**Calaveras Master Gardener**  
**San Andreas**