



## **RAISING AND TOASTING YOUR OWN SEEDS**

By Polly Wagenknecht, 4-H Youth Program Representative

*Plants are fun to raise, but they do need care. Regular watering will be most important.*

### **SUNFLOWERS**

1. Select a sunny spot in the garden or by a fence.
2. Spade the planting area. Break up large clods. If you fertilize, place it a few inches below where the plant is to be planted. Make a ½" deep hole for seed and cover with soil. Keep soil moist, but not too wet.
3. Plant at least ½" apart and keep soil moist. A few sunflowers will be all that you will want.
4. Soak the ground around the base every week or so.
5. Sunflower stalks may grow 7 to 12 feet high with flower heads measuring a foot or more across. Tie stalks to a strong stake to prevent from being blown over in the wind.
6. Birds may be attracted to the sunflower heads as the seed matures. If this becomes a problem, place a paper bag over the flowers to keep them intact.
7. Seeds are good to eat and are nutritious. See next page for directions on drying and salting your
8. Sunflower seeds.

### **PUMPKINS** (it takes about 4 months to grow a pumpkin)

1. Select a spot in the garden that gets full sun all day.
2. Each pumpkin vine will need a space at least 8 feet square (the vine may take up a space 10-20 feet in diameter).
3. Spade the whole planting area. Work the large clods down. If you use a fertilizer, place a few inches below the spot where the seeds grow.
4. Plant seed 1" deep. Keep soil around seeds just barely damp until they sprout through (about 1 week).
5. Select the strongest one or two plants. Cut off the rest to prevent crowding.
6. Every week or 10 days (more often in hot weather) soak the ground around the base of the plant; don't sprinkle the stem or leaves as they may cause mildew to grow. Leaves wilt when the plant needs water.
7. To get many small pumpkins, let all pumpkins grow and develop. To get the largest pumpkin possible, select one pumpkin. Cut off all others as they appear.
8. You may wish to apply a commercial fertilizer during the growing period. Follow label directions carefully.
9. Place a board or make a bed of straw under the ripening pumpkins to keep their bottoms sides from rotting.
10. Leave the pumpkins on the vine until Halloween unless the weather gets very wet. Store pumpkins in a cool place.

## SALTING AND DRYING

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In the strict sense of being edible, the sunflower or pumpkin seeds are edible without processing. The starch is not in a digestible form, and the bran is tougher than after cooking, but the kernel is rather sweet and sometimes nibbled on just after sun drying or as it comes from the flower at the end of the season.

### DRYING

Usually, sunflower or pumpkin seeds are oven-roasted. For roasting, they are spread in a shallow pan and roasted much the same as peanuts. They can be roasted plain or with a small amount of fat or oil. A fairly high temperature is used, 400° to 450°F. The seeds need careful watching at this temperature and frequent stirring to keep them from scorching. The length of time for drying varies and depends on the size of the seed. Approximately 15-30 minutes.

### SALTING

Soak seeds overnight in a strong salt brine before roasting. Use ¼ cup salt per gallon of water to make the brine.

### SUNFLOWER SEEDS

Yield: 7 ounces unshelled sunflower seeds yields ¾ cup of edible portion nutmeats which weigh 100 grams. 7 ounces of the unshelled seeds is approximately 2 cups.

Composition: In terms of 100 grams (3/4 cup) edible portion nutmeats:

|                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Calories – 560         | Calcium – 120 mg     |
| Carbohydrate – 19.9 gm | Vitamin A – 50 I.U.  |
| Iron – 7.1 mg          | Niacin – 5.2 mg      |
| Riboflavin - .23 mg    | Fat – 47.3 gm        |
| Protein – 24 gm        | Phosphorous – 837 mg |
|                        | Thiamin – 1.96 mg    |

### PUMPKIN SEEDS

Yield: 100 grams is ¾ cup seeds

Composition: In terms of 100 grams edible portion:

|                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Calories – 553       | Calcium – 51 mg       |
| Carbohydrate – 15 gm | Vitamin A – 70 I.U.   |
| Iron – 11.2 mg       | Niacin – 2.4 mg       |
| Riboflavin - .19 mg  | Fat – 46.7 gm         |
| Protein – 29 gm      | Phosphorous – 1144 mg |
|                      | Thiamin – .24 mg      |