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Thursday, May 1, 2025



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Cosmos Flowers: Planting, Growing, and Caring for Cosmos



Photo Credit: Pixabay

Botanical Name:
Cosmos bipinnatus

Plant Type: Flower

FREE GUIDE!



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The Complete Cosmos Flower Guide

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Cosmos are annual flowers with colorful, daisy-like flowers that sit atop long, slender stems. Blooming from summer through fall, they attract birds, bees, and butterflies to your garden. They're grown easily from seeds and will even survive in poor soil conditions! Here's how to plant and grow cosmos.

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About Cosmos

“A member of the Asteraceae family and native to Mexico, this beautiful, flowering plant is also known as Mexican aster,” explains the Oregon State University.

room. Their flowerheads may be bowl- or open-cup-shaped. These beautiful plants can reach 6 feet tall.

BUY SEEDS NOW

Cosmos grow in both beds and containers—and they also make excellent cut flowers and are wonderful additions to a [cutting garden](#).

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PLANTING

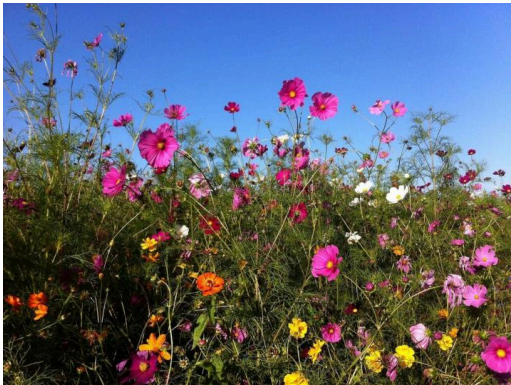
The soil should be well-draining, but other than that, cosmos don't need any special soil preparation. In fact, they like soil that is not too rich, as rich soil will encourage foliage at the expense of blooms. Cosmos are also tolerant of most soil pH levels but grow best in neutral to alkaline soils (pH of 7.0-7.5).

Cosmos can tolerate warm, dry weather very well. They are even drought-tolerant.

When to Plant Cosmos

- Direct-sow seeds outdoors once the danger of frost has passed.
- Alternatively, sow seeds indoors 4 to 6 weeks before your last spring frost date in trays or pots with a good seed-starting mixture. Move them into 5-inch pots as soon as they're 3 or 4 inches tall.
- Young plants (transplants) can be planted outdoors once the danger of

- Just sow seeds lightly—no more than 1/4-inch deep.
- Thin to 12–18 inches apart when seedlings are a few inches tall. Depending on the variety, cosmos can grow anywhere from 18 to 60 inches tall, so plan accordingly.
- If you are growing cosmos from seeds, be mindful that it takes about 7 weeks to first bloom. After that, your flowers should continue to bloom until the first fall frost.
- If you let the spiky-brown seed heads blow away during the fall, cosmos are likely to self-sow throughout your garden.



Let the spiky-brown seed heads blow where they will, and you may find your garden full of self-sown cosmos flowers.

- To prolong flowering, you should deadhead the plants (prune off dead/faded flowers). This speeds up flower development and aids branching.
- Because some of these plants can grow really tall, staking may be necessary. Offer them protection from strong winds, encourage balanced branching by pinching out (aka pruning) central shoots or stem tips, or stake them. Growing them against a fence can also provide the necessary support.
- Water regularly until plants are established or if it is unusually dry. According to the North Carolina Extension, “Be cautious not to overwater your plants. That and over-fertilizing can lead to the plant producing fewer flowers.”
- Cosmos can tolerate dry soil, even in a hot, arid, sunbaked spot.
- Cosmos beds may become weedy due to the fact that they self-seed, so remember to remove flowers before they go to seed or to thin seedlings in



Apart from needing at least a half-day of sunshine, cosmos seem to thrive on neglect.

Types

- **‘Picotee’** has pretty white flowers with a crimson border around the edge of the flower (some are also flecked in crimson).
- **‘Sea Shells’** have white, pink, or red tube-shaped petals.
- **‘Purity’** is a beautiful, classic, white flower that looks spectacular growing against the dark-maroon ‘Niger’ hollyhock or [purple basil](#).
- **‘Cosmos Sonata Series’** looks especially good with Bells of Ireland.
- **‘Chocolate’** cosmos adds distinction to a white campanula, dianthus, or ‘Moonshine’ achillea.
- Tall cosmos are best for the back of

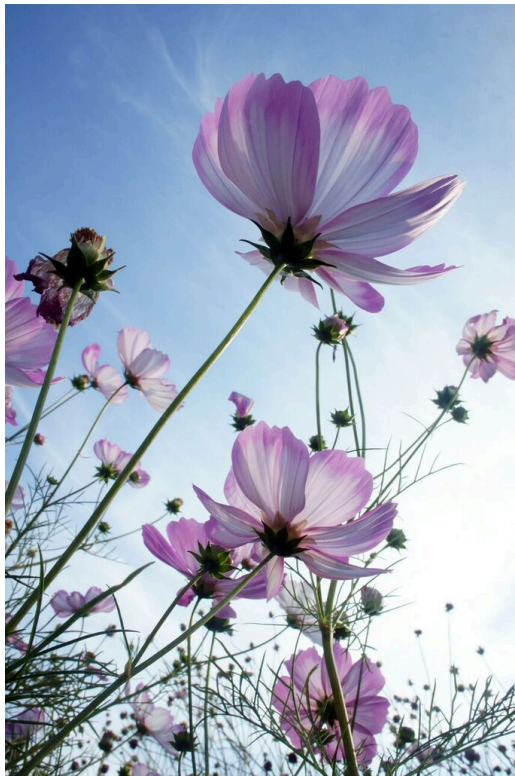
phlox, delphiniums, and daisies, as well as annuals such as poppies, cleome, and asters.

- Dwarf cosmos, such as the Ladybird series, are great companions for zinnias, Johnny jump-ups, pansies, alchemilla, or dark-blue morning glory.

HARVESTING

Harvesting Seeds and Cut Flowers

- To harvest more seeds, remember to leave a few flowers on the plant because they will self-seed.
- You can cut the flowers off anytime after blooming, but it's best to pick some right when the petals have opened.
- If you cut the blossoms when they first open, they'll last more than a week in water. Strip off the lower leaves and put them in a vase.



Cosmos is the heart of a summer garden, adding a distinct elegance to bouquets in everything from jelly jars to silver urns.

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WIT AND WISDOM

- Cosmos is one of the [October birth flowers](#).

FLOWERS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catherine Boeckmann



Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not surprising that she and The Old Farmer's Almanac found each other. She leads digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More](#)

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COMMENTS

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Genahope Thomson (not verified) 7 months

2 weeks ago

Hi, enjoyed your article on cosmos. My Niece and her husband harvested a lot of Cosmos flowers 🌸 on their land in Hawaii. I live in Alabama. She sent pictures. They look like a bright pink. So Hawaii seems like a great place to grow them also. Is the land in Central Alabama good for growing Cosmos?? I like them a lot!!!! Very pretty!!!! Thanks , Ght.

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[REPLY](#)

Suellen Maloney (not verified) 9 months 2 weeks ago

Greetings. I've thoroughly enjoyed my cosmos for several months, but now I may have a problem that has not been mentioned anywhere in researching. Among my flowering plants have grown cosmos that are markedly larger. The stalk is as thick as my thumb, they each have many large leaves that are growing right to the top of the stalk, and only one of them has produced a small amount of flowers. They take up a significant amount of space. Should I pull these freaks out?

[REPLY](#)

The Editors 9 months 2 weeks ago

Hi Suellen,

Cosmos certainly are a great annual to enjoy through the growing season. With that being said, your issue with

One reason for it could be too much nitrogen. Cosmos are sensitive to nitrogen and it can cause exactly what happened to some of yours. If you have been fertilizing those cosmos (or maybe it came from fertilizer spread on the lawn) you should cut back on fertilizing—or stop all together. If you need to fertilize, do so with a mix that is low in nitrogen. It is completely up to you if you want to pull them out because of space issues, but you could also wait to see if flowers arrive later in the season.

REPLY

Scotty P (not verified) 1 year 7 months ago

Do Cosmos need to be cut back for winter? We live in Kentucky and have moderate winter weather.

REPLY

Will the Cosmos come up ever yeay I
live in Kansas

REPLY

The Editors 1 year 7 months ago

Most cosmos are annuals, so after all the blooms are spent this fall you can cut them back/pull them from the ground. Cosmos self-seed so if you do not want them to grow in the same area, make sure you remove spent flower before they go to seed. If you want them to remain in that area of your yard or garden, you can allow the flowers to remain on the stalks so that the seeds fall to the ground and then remove. You can also remove the flowers and save the seeds to plant in the spring, either indoors 4 to 6 weeks before your last frost date or directly into the ground once the threat of frost has passed.

REPLY

Becky (not verified) 1 year 8 months ago

I planted cosmos from seeds and they are 4-6' tall, look healthy, but no flowers or buds. At all. Some did get chomped by an animal but still there are plenty that didn't. Any ideas how come they wouldn't produce flowers? So bummed!

REPLY

Patricia (not verified) 1 year 8 months ago

When flower dies do you just cut the flower off and leave the stem

REPLY

The Editors 1 year 8 months ago

An important part of maintaining your cosmos is to deadhead. When you deadhead spent cosmos flowers, it forces the plant to put its energy into creating more flowers instead of making seeds. When the blooms are

plants will produce a new set of buds
and before you know it a new set of
flowers will be brightening up
your garden!

REPLY

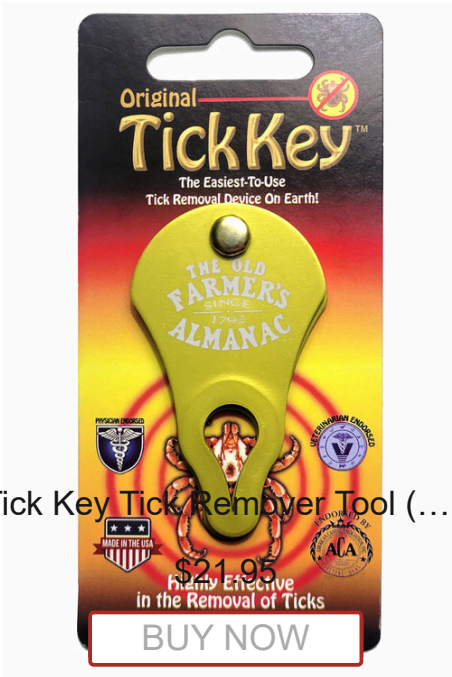
Scott Davis (not verified) 1 year 11 months
ago

Beware of Cosmos, a beautiful orange flower,
named “Diablo” the dried seed heads will at-
tack, at least according to my wife who gets at-
tacked by everything in the garden. The seeds
are about 1/2” long and very sharp when dry,
no fun in your shoes or sandals.

REPLY

MORE COMMENTS

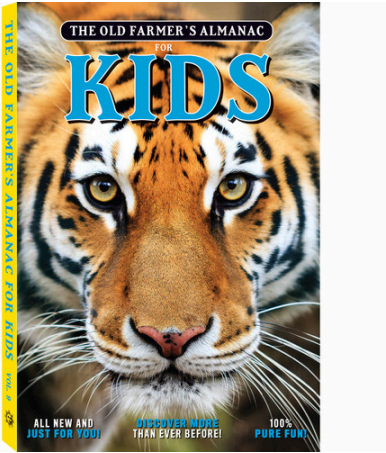
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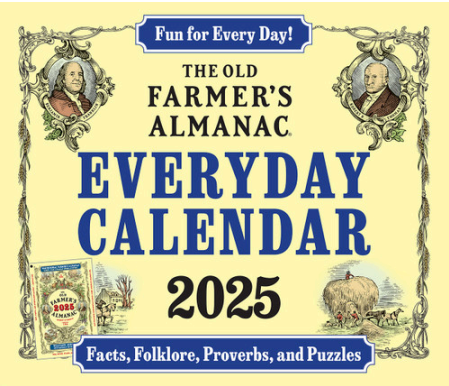
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