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Nasturtium Flowers: Planting, Growing, and Caring for Nasturtiums



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The Complete Nasturtium Flower Guide


By [Catherine Boeckmann](#)
Last Updated: March 20, 2025



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The nasturtium is a cheerful flower that does it all! This annual adds a pop of color to the garden, fights insect pests, and is even edible. Pop one in your mouth! Here's how to plant and grow nasturtiums (as well as some tasty ways to enjoy them after you harvest the flowers).

About Nasturtiums

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These lovely plants, with their unique greenery and vibrant flowers, grow well in [containers](#) or as ground cover around vegetable gardens. In fact, they are often used as a trap crop in [companion planting](#), drawing aphids and other garden pests away from the more valuable vegetables.

- Nasturtium is a friend of beans, [broccoli](#), cabbage, cucumber, kale, melon, pumpkin, and radish.

Pests aren't the only thing nasturtiums attract, however. They are also a favorite of pollinators like bees, butterflies, and [hummingbirds](#), and their pretty fragrance makes them a good choice for [cut-flower gardens](#), too.

Nasturtiums are grown as annual plants in most areas, though they may perennialize in frost-free zones.

Types of Nasturtiums

There are many varieties of nasturtiums, which are divided into two main types: **trailing or climbing types** (*Tropaeolum majus*) and **bush types** (*T. minus*). As their names suggest, the main difference between them is their growth habit, with trailing nasturtiums forming long vines and bush nasturtiums remaining more compact. (Bush types are also sometimes called “dwarf” nasturtiums.)

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Trailing nasturtiums are great for growing in a [window box](#) or hanging basket, as their vines drape and climb beautifully. Bush nasturtiums are a better choice for [smaller gardens](#) where space is limited.



Nasturtiums are Edible Flowers!

An important feature of all nasturtiums is their edibility! Nasturtiums' leaves, flowers, and seed-pods have a peppery, almost mustard-like taste, which makes them lovely as a salad garnish. The seedpods may also be pickled and used like capers.

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Check out our video to learn more about the benefits of growing nasturtiums:

Reasons You Should Grow Nasturtiums 8



Read Next

- [Companion Planting Chart and Guide for Vegetable Gardens](#)
- [Growing Edible Flowers in Your Garden](#)
- [Companion Planting With Flowers](#)

PLANTING

Plant nasturtiums in full sun (6+ hours of sunlight) for the best results. They will grow in partial shade (3–6 hours of sunlight), but won't bloom as well.

Soil should be well-draining. Nasturtiums do well in poorer soils and do not typically need extra fertilizer (unless your soil is extremely poor). Too much nitrogen will encourage more foliage than flowers.

Be conscious of the growing habit of the type of nasturtium you're growing. Plan to provide support for trailing types.

When to Plant Nasturtiums

Nasturtium seeds may be sown directly in the garden (recommended) or started indoors. Because their fragile roots are sensitive to transplanting, we prefer to sow them directly.

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- **Indoors:** Start seeds 2 to 4 weeks before your last spring frost date.
- **Outdoors:** Sow seeds 1 to 2 weeks after your last spring frost date. Soil temperatures should ideally be between 55° and 65°F (12° and 18°C). Plan to protect young seedlings from late frosts.

How to Plant Nasturtiums

- Sow the seeds about half an inch deep and 10 to 12 inches apart in the garden.
- Plants should appear in 7 to 10 days.



GROWING

- Water regularly throughout the growing season, but be careful not to overwater your plants. Nasturtiums are somewhat drought tolerant but still prefer to grow in moist soil. Plus, water-stressed plants will have subpar blooms and flavor.
- Cutting off the faded/dead flowers will prolong blooming.
- If you're growing nasturtiums in containers, they may need to be trimmed back occasionally over the growing season. This encourages the plants to produce new foliage.
- In summer, nasturtiums may stop blooming if they become heat-stressed. Their flavor may become more intense, too. Keeping them sufficiently watered can help to mitigate the effects of extreme temperatures.

Types

- **'Alaska Mix'** has variegated foliage and a mix of flower colors.

- **‘Salmon Baby’**, to add a pretty salmon-pink color to your garden.
- **‘Variegatus’**, which is a trailing type with red or orange flowers.
- **‘Peach Melba’** has creamy yellow flowers with orange-red centers.
- **‘Amazon Jewel’**: variegated foliage; gemstone flowers of gold, pale lemon, orange, peachy-rose, and ruby
- **‘Empress of India’**: heirloom; blue-green foliage; scarlet flowers
- **‘Jewel of Africa’**: variegated foliage; cream-color, orange, peachy-pink, scarlet, and yellow flowers
- **‘Moonlight’**: green foliage; pale yellow flowers

HARVESTING

- Leaves and flowers can be harvested at any time.
- Seedpods should be harvested before seeds have had a chance to mature and harden.
- Snip off leaves, flowers, and seedpods with scissors to avoid damaging the plant.
- If you allow the seedpods to mature, you can save the nasturtium’s chick-pea-size seeds and replant them in the spring! Let the seeds dry out on the vine; they’ll fall off. Collect them, brush off the soil, dry them, and store them in a paper envelope in a cool

and dark place. [Learn more about](#)
[saving seeds.](#)

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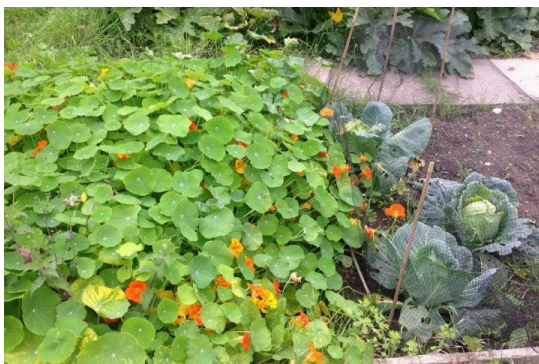
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- [Slugs](#)
- [Whiteflies](#)



Nasturtiums are often used as a trap crop, attracting pests like aphids away from vulnerable vegetables. Photo by Catherine Boeckmann.

WIT AND WISDOM

- Nasturtium flowers are said to symbolize patriotism. Find out more [flower meanings here](#).
- Nasturtium flowers are one of several common [garden flowers that are edible](#)!
- Every spring, as many as 10 gardeners at the [Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum](#) in Boston, Massachusetts, hang baskets of nasturtiums on the balconies above its courtyard, from which fall 20-foot-long trailing vines. Seeds for the plants are started in June and then trained at the museum's greenhouses throughout the winter to be ready for the following spring's exhibition. The display lasts about 3 weeks.

RECIPES

NASTURTIUM AND SHRIMP SALAD APPETIZER

COOKING NOTES

Leaves, flowers, and immature seedpods are edible and make for a beautiful garnish on any summer meal! The seedpods may also be pickled.

FLOWERS

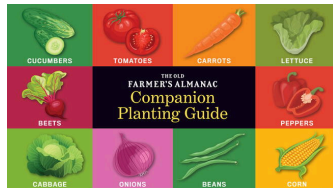
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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 from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

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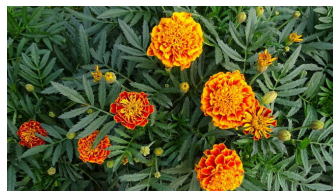
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COMMENTS

ADD A COMMENT

Iris Miller (not verified)

2 years 11 months ago

I would like to order seeds for edible flowers as de-

scribed in this news letter. Do you sell them?

Who do you recommend? I live in Greenwich, NY zip-

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code 12834

Thanks

REPLY

B. Edwards (not verified) 2 years ago

I've been ordering my Heirloom seeds from Baker Creek Seeds.. out of Missouri. ALL their seeds are heirlooms. They have a MULTITUDE of items. Last year, one of my Black Cherry Tomatoe plants produced POUNDS of beautiful little cherry tomatoes! Just wanted to share their name/site, as I have ordered Nasturtiums from them. Only attempted them 1 year, of which our weather (Kentucky) was horrible that year, so I had 'issues' with a lot of my garden plants. Just wanted to share them with you, and everyone else!

Good luck!!!

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://www.aresseeds.com/&ved=2ahUKEwie8I6wyMD-AhVlhIkEHZ7JA1UQFnoECAkQAQ&usg=AOvVaw0WD-t_OcJy1BuO3Xodw3o5

REPLY

Brad Frazee (not verified) 2 years 6 months ago

Hi Iris,

I live in nearby in Speigletown N.Y. and found nasturtium seed packets for sale a few years ago at the Potter Hill Barn off route 7 Hoosick Falls. Their phone number is 518 686-7777.

Once you have established plants, in the fall harvest the chick pea size seeds, and dry them. You should have more than enough for next year and should never have to buy seeds again.

REPLY

The Editors 2 years 11 months ago

We do not currently sell nasturtium seeds, but we do have a number of other (non-edible) flower seeds available in our [online store](#).

REPLY

eddie (not verified) 3 years 10 months ago

hi, i live in San Francisco and my vines were really full and green early spring but now the vines are turning yellow and shriveling up and the flowers are dying off. i have nasturtiums in two other beds (those beds appear ok for now) and crawling up an ugly cyclone fence. we are in a drought but my neighborhood is in the constant SF fog and wind. they get good sun in the

day when its out. do you have any idea what is causing them to die off? will i loose all my beds? (they are a great cover on the cyclone fence and would hate to loose that plus they grow alot faster than jasmine) please advise. Thanks! -eddie

REPLY

Angela (not verified) 1 year 10 months ago

The same thing is happening to mine!! I live in Alameda so I have a similar climate to San Francisco. I have LOADS of seed pods also which makes me think maybe they've gone through a "season" already and are just winding up the cycle. I don't know what to do to extend their growth. I'm going to throw new seeds in the ground and maybe they'll take off...

REPLY

Saber (not verified) 11 months 3 weeks ago

Angelia - Deadhead your nasturtiums! If you leave the dead flower heads on your plant, they will go to seed. Deadhead the old flower heads and trim back any wilted or yellow leaves. And remember to use pruning shears and cut off instead of pinch off any dead flowers and leaves. Pinching off will cause damage to your nasturtium's vines

and cause them to die off also. I usually walk by and deadhead my plants every time I am in the garden. Takes only minutes and will keep my flowers coming all summer long. Stop deadheading in the early fall, thus allowing the plant to go to seed so you can get plenty of seed pods for the following year. One last tip: before planting nasturtiums, lightly rub your nasturtium seeds between two sheets of sandpaper to lightly scrape the outer coating of the seeds. The key here is LIGHTLY sand the seeds. This will help to break down the outer shell of the seed and help it to germinate quicker. Happy Growing!!!

REPLY

Kelly (not verified) 3 years 1 month ago

They are annuals. They die off every year although they will probably reseed themselves

REPLY

Robin (not verified) 3 years 11 months ago

I planted fresh (purchased this season) Nasturtium seeds both in the ground and in containers after all risk of frost and it's been 2 weeks and nothing has germinated. The package said to soak the seeds

overnight which I did. Any ideas what's going on?

Should I keep waiting?

REPLY

Laura (not verified)3 years 1 month ago

Before planting, I scrape my nasturtium seeds with a file to scuff them up a bit. This should help with germination. Best of luck!

Nasturtiums are one of my very favorites!

REPLY

MORE COMMENTS

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