

## Zinnia

Your zinnia (pronounced “zin-knee-ahh”) seed was planted in a pot designed to decompose in the garden. The pot is made of coconut coir and the roots of the plant will grow through the pot into the earth. You can plant your pot into a larger container, or plant it into the garden. Cover the whole pot with soil, including the rim. It is best not to transplant your small plant.

Zinnias like full sun. This means that the spot you plant the zinnia in should receive at least 6 hours of sun during the day. Your plant will grow best in well drained soil, and will love some extra compost to nourish it. Keep the soil around your zinnia moist, but not soggy. When watering your plant, try not to get the leaves wet. This helps the plant avoid diseases such as powdery mildew and fungi.

Your zinnia will produce a daisy shaped flower on its stem. You can help the plant make more flowers by pinching off the top two leaves when they are small, to encourage the plant to make additional stems and leaves. Then the plant will grow additional flowers on each stem. When the flowers begin to fade and look old, dry, or shrivelled, cut them off close to the leaves. This is called “deadheading”, which is a fancy word gardeners use to say “off with their heads”. When the faded flower is removed, the plant will grow another flower in its place.

In August, you may decide to collect seeds from your plant. Let the last flowers grow old, and when they are dry, pick the whole flower and place it in an envelope. Write the colour and the name of your plant on the envelope so you can remember what it was. In the spring, the old dry flower can be pulled apart and you will see the seeds. You can plant the seeds in small pots indoors in April, or you can plant them directly into the garden after the long weekend in May.

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The zinnia is native to Mexico where the Aztecs named them “mal de ojos” or “hard on the eyes”. They called the zinnias this because they have such brightly coloured flowers.

The zinnia is named after the 18<sup>th</sup> century botanist, Johann Gottfried Zinn, who was the first person to write a scientific description of the plant.



Gardening is something you learn by doing. Observe your plant as it grows. If you want to send us a photo or write us an email about how your zinnia did, we would love to hear from you.

Kanata-March Horticultural Society at [www.kanata-horticultural.com](http://www.kanata-horticultural.com); email: [kanatamhs@gmail.com](mailto:kanatamhs@gmail.com)