

Starting Flowers From Seed Indoors vs Outdoors



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Some flowers should only be direct sown for the best results, while many others will benefit from being started indoors — especially in areas with shorter growing seasons. Whether starting indoors or out, timing is important. Seedlings started indoors too early will get too big and leggy. Outdoors, tender seedlings may be killed by frost. The following lists provide the ideal sowing time for common flower seeds, many of which are flexible and appear on both lists.

Flower	Indoors/ Weeks Before Last Frost	Outdoors/ Weeks Before Last Frost	Outdoors/ Weeks After Last Frost
African daisy	6-8	1-2	
Alyssum (Sweet alyssum)	4-6	1-2	
Amaranth	4-6		1-2
Aster	6-8		1-2
Balsam	6-8		1-2
Beardtongues (Penstemon)	6-8	6-8	
Bee balm	8-10	2-4	
Bells of Ireland	6-8	2-4	
Billy buttons (Craspedia)	6-8		2-4
Black-eyed Susan (Rudbeckia hirta)	8-10	2-4	
Black-eyed Susan vine (Thunbergia alata)	6-8		6-8
Blanket (Gaillardia)	6-8	4-6	
Bluebonnet	6-8	4-6	
Canterbury bells	6-8		2-4
Carnation	8-10	1-2	
Cockscombs (Celosia)	6-8		6-8
Coleus	6-8		1-2
Columbine	10-12	4-6	
Coneflower (Echinacea)	10-12	2-4	
Cornflower (Bachelor's button)	4-6	1-2	
Cosmos	4-6		1-2
Cup-and-saucer vine (cathedral bells)	6-8		1-2
Cypress vine (cardinal vine, hummingbird vine)	6-8		1-2
Dahlia	8-10		2-4
Desertbells (desert bluebells)	6-8	2-4	
False Queen Anne's lace (Ammi majus)	4-6	1-2	
Feverfew	8-10	4-6	
Flax		4-6	
Flowering flax (Scarlet flax)	4-6		
Forget-me-not (Scorpion grass)	4-6	1-2	
Four o'clock (marvel-of-Peru)	6-8		1-2
Foxglove (Digitalis)	6-8		1-2
Globe amaranths (Gomphrena)	6-8		2-4
Golden everlasting (Strawflower)	6-8		2-4
Heliotrope	10-12		1-2
Hoary stock (gilly flower, ten-week stock)	8-10		1-2
Hollyhock	6-8		1-2
Honeywort (Cerinthe)	4-6		2-4

Flower	Indoors/ Weeks Before Last Frost	Outdoors/ Weeks Before Last Frost	Outdoors/ Weeks After Last Frost
Hyssop (true hyssop)	6-8		2-4
Impatiens (touch-me-not)	6-8		1-2
Larkspur (Delphinium)	6-8	4-6	1-2
Lavender	10-12	4-6	
Lobelia	8-10		1-2
Love-in-a-mist (ragged lady)		2-4	
Love-lies-bleeding (pendant amaranth, tassel flower)	6-8		1-2
Lupine	6-8	4-6	1-2
Lyreleaf greeneyes (chocolate daisy)	6-8	1-2	
Marigold	4-6		1-2
Milkweed (Asclepias)	6-8	2-4	
Morning glory	4-6		1-2
Mullein (Verbascum)	6-8	2-4	
Nasturtium	2-4		1-2
Painted daisy (pyrethrum)	6-8	1-2	
Painted tongue (Salpiglossis)	8-10	1-2	
Pansy	8-10	4-6	
Petunia	10-12		
Phlox	6-8	2-4	
Pincushions (Scabiosa)	6-8		1-2
Pink (garden pink, common pink)	8-10		1-2
Poppy	6-8	4-6	
Pot marigold (Calendula officinalis)	4-6	2-4	
Purslane (Portulaca)	6-8		1-2
Sage (garden sage, common sage)	8-10		1-2
Sea lavender (statice)	8-10		2-4
Shasta daisy	6-8	2-4	
Silver ragwort	8-10		1-2
Snapdragon	8-10	4-6	
Spider flowers (Cleome)	6-8	2-4	
Sunflower	2-4		2-4
Sweet pea	4-6	4-6	
Sweet William	8-10		1-2
Tickseed (Coreopsis)	6-8	1-2	
Tithonia (Mexican sunflower)	6-8		1-2
Toadflax (Linaria)	6-8	1-2	
Vervain (Verbena)	10-12	2-4	
Viola (violet)	8-10	4-6	
White lace (Orlaya grandiflora, Minoan lace)	6-8		1-2
Whiteweed (Ageratum)	6-8		
Woolflowers	6-8		
Yarrow (common yarrow)	8-10		2-4
Zinnia	4-6		1-2