FLOWERS · A SUNNY GARDEN BED WITH ROOM FOR TALL STEMS

Let's grow hollyhock.

Alcea rosea 'Indian Spring'

This plan is for **Indian Spring hollyhock**

Old-fashioned flowers reaching above the fence.

9 × 3 ft garden bed **9 seeds → 3 plants**

Before you start

For this seed packet, sow 1–2 weeks after your average last frost, or about 2 months before your first fall frost.

By jennyzhuang

Sources checked September 28, 2026 View sources ↗

LIGHT

Loves the sun

Choose at least 6 hours of direct sun and shelter from strong winds.

WATER

Moist while getting started

Keep seeds and young roots moist; established plants need less frequent watering.

FEEDING

Soil-led feeding

Use compost where needed; add fertilizer only if a soil test supports it.

BEFORE YOU START

Your little kit.

- ✓ 9 seeds from a Botanical Interests Indian Spring hollyhock packet
- ✓ 3 sturdy stakes with soft ties for a windy site
- ✓ A trowel and watering can with a gentle rose

THE SOIL

Use well-drained garden soil. Improve poor soil with finished compost if it needs organic matter; avoid a soggy planting pocket. This is an in-ground bed, not a small-pot recipe.

Start with what's on this list. Add plant food only when the feeding section says it's needed.

YOUR SIMPLE GROWING PLAN

A garden bed. Here's the plan.

A sunny garden bed with room for tall stems. Start with **seeds**.

THE SPACE

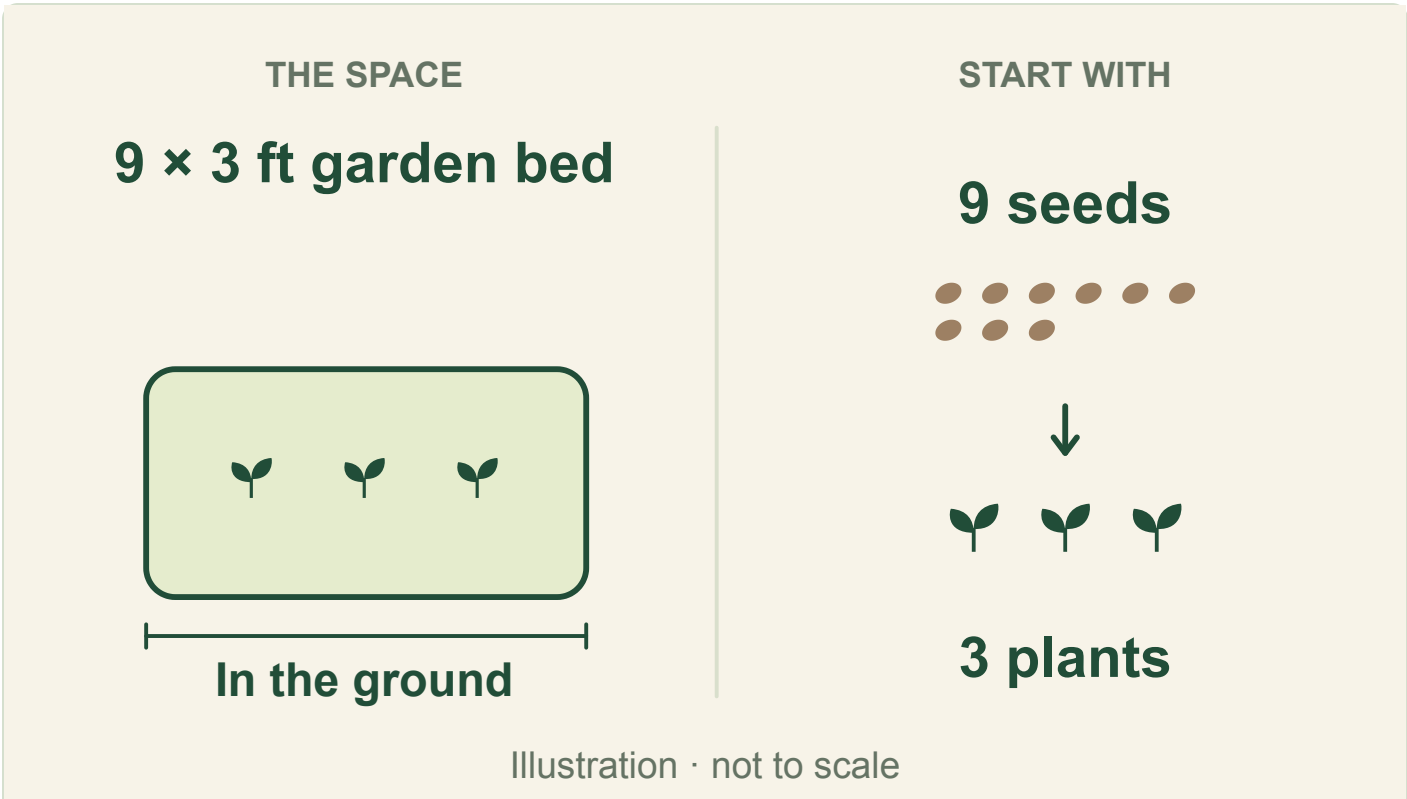
9 × 3 ft garden bed

Our three-plant bed layout uses 36-inch spacing, the roomy end of this seed packet's 24–36-inch range.

HOW MANY

9 seeds → 3 plants

Use Botanical Interests Indian Spring: 3 seeds per spot, then keep 1 plant.



9 × 3 ft garden bed · 9 seeds → 3 plants Our three-plant bed layout uses 36-inch spacing, the roomy end of this seed packet's 24–36-inch range. Use Botanical Interests Indian Spring: 3 seeds per spot, then keep 1 plant. Original illustration; not to scale.

01

Mark three roomy spots

Along the center of a 9 × 3 ft sunny bed, mark positions at 1½, 4½, and 7½ ft from one end. This is our layout for three plants.

02

Follow this packet's sowing depth

For Botanical Interests Indian Spring, press 3 seeds into the soil surface at each spot and water gently. If your purchased packet differs, follow its directions.

03

Keep one at each spot

Keep the seed surface moist. At about 3 inches tall, snip the extras so one seedling remains per spot, 36 inches apart.

04

Support growing stems

For a windy position, set stakes early without piercing the roots. Tie the stems loosely as they grow; keep water aimed at soil rather than leaves.

Other ways to start

Buy three nursery starts

Choose Indian Spring if you want the same named mix. Keep the root ball intact, plant at its existing depth, and use the same 36-inch spacing. Water it in and keep young roots moist. Buying a start does not guarantee flowers that summer; ask about the plant's age and flowering stage.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE

Water & fertilizer at a glance.

WATER WHEN

Keep the seed surface moist. As young roots develop, keep the upper 6 inches damp, not soggy. Established plants mainly need extra water during prolonged dry or hot spells.

FERTILIZER

Compost only if the bed needs organic matter; no routine branded feed

AMOUNT

Optional 1-inch layer of compost

WHAT THAT AMOUNT COVERS

At 1 inch deep, the whole 9 × 3 ft bed takes up to 2¼ cu ft of compost; use less to leave crowns clear. This is not a per-plant amount.

HOW OFTEN TO FEED

Spring, if needed. No routine liquid feeding.

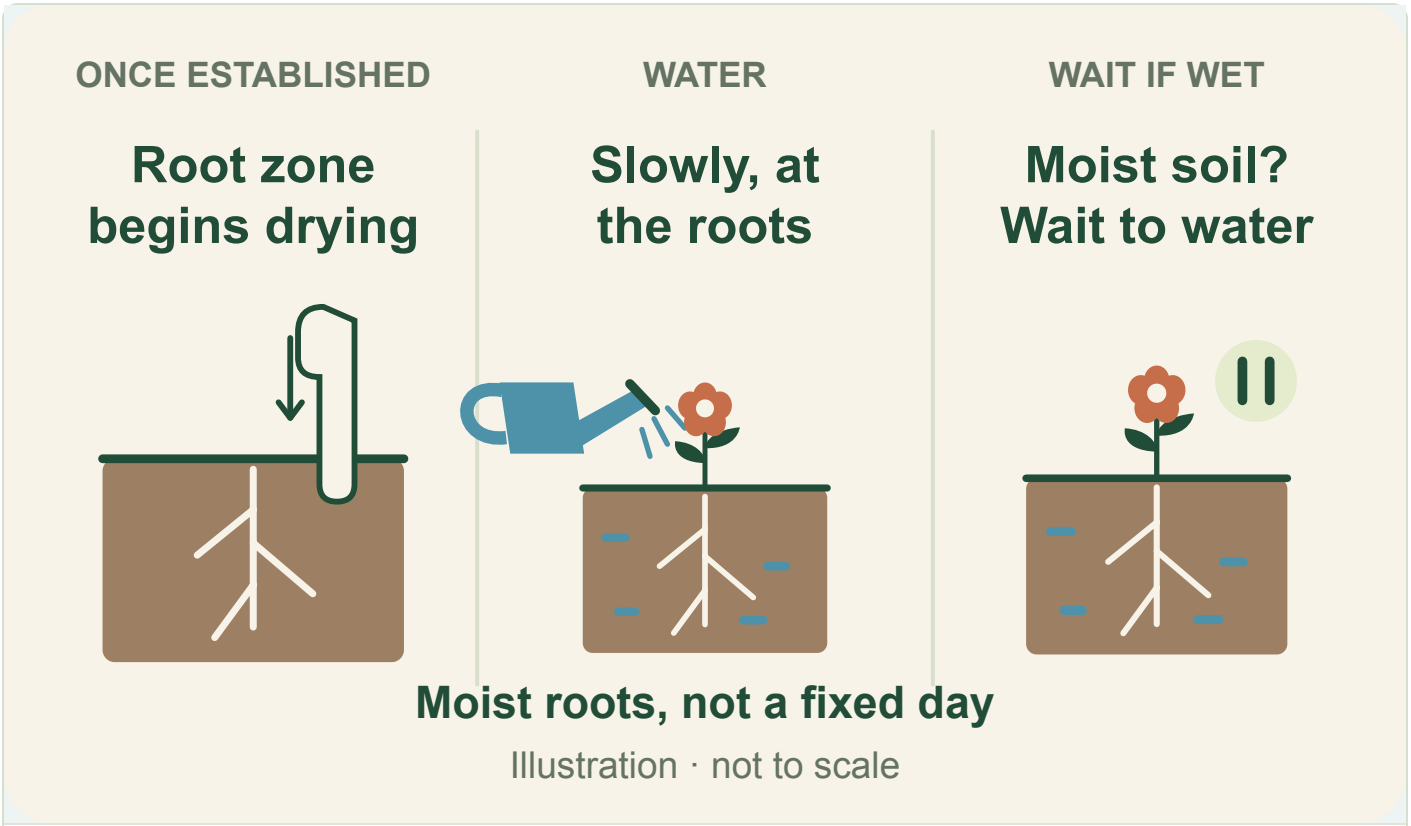
WHEN TO START OR PAUSE

Top-dress established plants only where organic matter is needed. If growth stays weak after checking conditions, follow a soil test for any additional nutrients.

01 / EVERYDAY CARE

When to water.

Check the three seed spots daily and keep their surface moist with a gentle rose until germination. As young roots develop, keep the upper 6 inches of soil damp, not soggy; check beside the plants without digging into their roots. Water slowly at ground level when that zone begins drying. Established plants mainly need extra water through prolonged dry or hot spells. Check after rain rather than assuming it soaked in. The goal is a damp root zone, not a set daily gallon.



Check before watering. Keep the seed surface moist. As young roots develop, keep the upper 6 inches damp, not soggy. Established plants mainly need extra water during prolonged dry or hot spells. Original illustration; not to scale.

> **The easy rule**
>
> Check first. Water only when the plant needs it.

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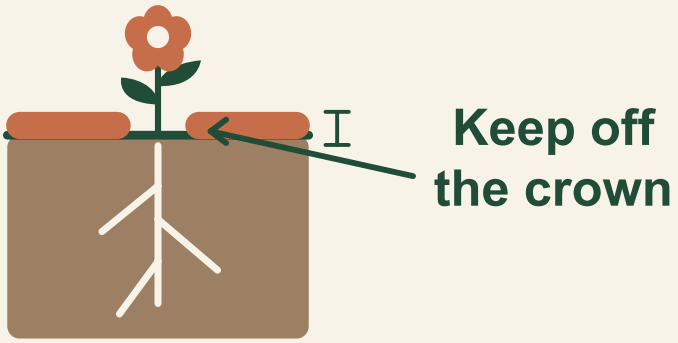
02 / PLANT FOOD

Exactly what to feed it.

Start without a weekly liquid feed. If the bed needs organic matter, top-dress established plants in spring with about 1 inch of finished compost, leaving their crowns clear. Across the whole 9 × 3 ft bed, a 1-inch layer would use 2¼ cubic feet; leaving the crowns uncovered uses a little less.

OPTIONAL TOP-DRESSING

1-inch layer of compost



Optional compost · no routine liquid feed

Illustration · not to scale

Optional 1-inch layer of compost At 1 inch deep, the whole 9 × 3 ft bed takes up to 2¼ cu ft of compost; use less to leave crowns clear. This is not a per-plant amount. Spring, if needed. No routine liquid feeding. Top-dress established plants only where organic matter is needed. If growth stays weak after checking conditions, follow a soil test for any additional nutrients. Original illustration; not to scale.

THE SIMPLE FEEDING PLAN

Start without extra fertilizer.

Skip compost where organic matter is already adequate. If growth remains weak after correcting light and watering, use a soil fertility test to decide whether nutrients are missing. Choose a fertilizer and amount that fit the result and its US label; there is no universal bloom-booster dose for these three plants. Fertilizer does not treat rust.

03 / WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Sprouting, height, and flowering year

Indian Spring gives single flowers on stems about 5–8 ft tall. First-year flowers are possible with this cultivar, but allow until the second summer. The packet estimates germination in about 10–14 days under suitable conditions.

When to sow in your area

For this packet, direct sow 1–2 weeks after the local average last frost, or about 2 months before the first fall frost. Use local dates and actual weather rather than a fixed nationwide month.

For regional planting windows, find your local Cooperative Extension office ↗.

Something looking off?

Can I start Indian Spring indoors?

Yes. This supplier gives a 6–8-week head start before your average last frost. Use individual biodegradable pots to reduce root disturbance when planting out, and provide strong light. Direct sowing remains the simpler option because it avoids moving the sensitive roots.

Do rusty bumps mean the plant needs food?

Yellow-orange spots above a leaf and raised brown-red bumps below can indicate hollyhock rust. Extra fertilizer will not fix that pattern. Check both sides and remove affected leaves early; seek an Extension diagnosis if unsure. Holes alone are a different symptom and do not confirm rust.

Will saved seeds give me the same flower color?

Do not count on it. Indian Spring is sold as a color mix, and seed-grown offspring may differ from their parent. Collect only from healthy plants when seed cases turn brown; do not save seeds from rust-infected plants. Buy a named single-color selection if color consistency is essential.

Clearing rust debris and managing seedlings

Clear infected leaves and stems

Remove dead stems and leaves at season's end; the rust fungus can overwinter in infected debris. Remove heavily affected plants when needed. No cultivar should be described as completely immune.

Manage seedlings and replace tired plants

Hollyhocks are short-lived and may self-seed. Remove faded spikes if you do not want seedlings. Replace tired plants deliberately and keep this planting ornamental.

Help with your next step.

Compare flowers for a garden bed

Compare planting space, starting method and feeding approach before adding another border plant.

Find a flower project if you only have patio space

Choose a container plan with its own pot size and feeding amounts when a 9 × 3 ft hollyhock bed will not fit.

BEHIND THIS GUIDE

Where the advice comes from.

Plant care is based on the sources below. Planting layouts and beginner routines combine that guidance into one practical plan; they are editorial choices, not results from a Plant Care Steps growing trial.

- Botanical Interests: Indian Spring sowing depth, timing, and size ↗
  https://www.botanicalinterests.com/products/indian-spring-hollyhock-seeds
- NC State: hollyhock habit and growth ↗
  https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/alcea-rosea/
- RHS: hollyhock care and support ↗
  https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/hollyhocks/growing-guide
- Wisconsin Extension: hollyhock rust and soil-test-led feeding ↗
  https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/hollyhock-rust/
- Maryland Extension: caring for garden flowers ↗
  https://extension.umd.edu/resource/care-annuals-and-perennials

Something needs updating? Suggest a correction

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Compiled with AI assistance. These first-edition guides have not yet had an independent horticultural review. Read our editorial approach.