FLOWERS · AN OPEN, SUNNY PATIO WITH A STABLE POT

Let's grow dwarf sunflower.

Helianthus annuus 'Junior'

This plan is for **Junior dwarf sunflower**

A little sunflower, right outside your door.

12-inch pot **2 seeds → 1 plant**

Before you start

Sow outdoors after frost danger has passed, with enough warm season remaining for the seed packet's flowering estimate.

By jennyzhuang

Sources checked September 27, 2026 View sources ↗



LIGHT

Full sun

Choose a spot with at least 6 hours of direct sunlight.



WATER

Steady, draining moisture

Keep seeds and young roots moist; use the top-inch check only after establishment.



FEEDING

Starter feed first

Use the bag's feeding start point, then a measured 14-day routine during active growth.

BEFORE YOU START

Your little kit.

- ✓ One 12-inch-wide pot, at least 12 inches deep
- ✓ 2 Junior dwarf sunflower seeds
- ✓ Fresh potting mix and a watering can; a small stake if the spot is windy

THE SOIL

Miracle-Gro Organic Potting Mix (US; contains starter nutrients—check your bag)

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

YOUR SIMPLE GROWING PLAN

One pot. Here's the plan.

An open, sunny patio with a stable pot. Start with **seeds**.

THE POT

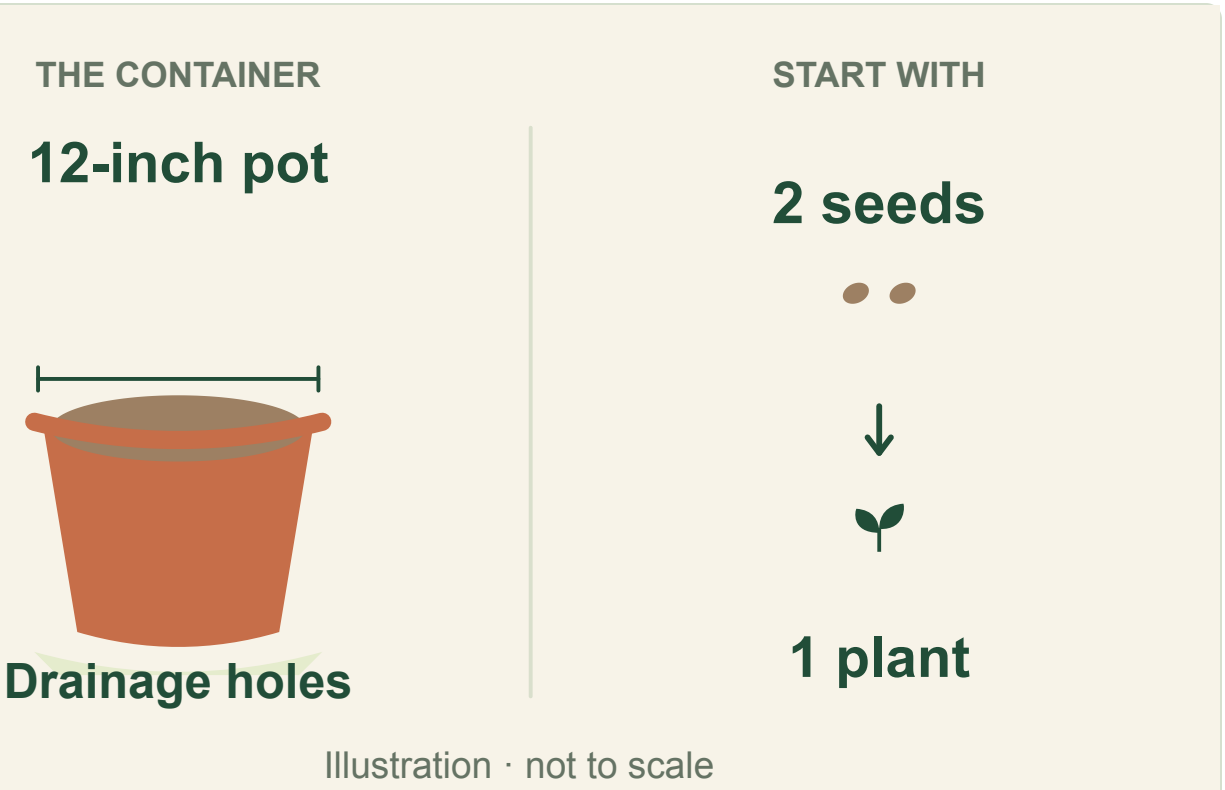
12-inch pot

At least 12 inches deep, with drainage and a stable base.

HOW MANY

2 seeds → 1 plant

Choose seeds labeled Junior; this recipe keeps one branching dwarf sunflower.



12-inch pot · 2 seeds → 1 plant At least 12 inches deep, with drainage and a stable base. Choose seeds labeled Junior; this recipe keeps one branching dwarf sunflower. Original illustration; not to scale.

01

Start in warm weather

Sow after frost risk has passed, with days and nights reliably above 50°F.

02

Sow in its final home

Fill and dampen the pot. Plant 2 seeds near the center, about an inch apart and ½ inch deep.

03

Thin to one

Keep the surface moist. When seedlings are about 3 inches tall, snip the weaker one so the remaining plant has the pot to itself.

04

Give it sun and stability

Keep the pot in full sun. If wind makes the stem lean, use a small stake and a loose, soft tie rather than tying it tightly.

Help with the setup: drainage holes and saucers · potting mix vs. garden soil.

Other ways to start

Use a labeled dwarf nursery start

A small Junior start can skip germination if available. Keep the root ball intact and plant at the same soil level. For another cultivar, check its mature height and container directions before using this pot size.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE

Water & fertilizer at a glance.

WATER WHEN

Keep the seed zone and young roots lightly moist. Once growing well, water as the top inch starts drying; wet the roots and drain.

FERTILIZER

Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (US 24-8-16)

AMOUNT

1 tablespoon in 1 US gallon of water

WHAT THAT AMOUNT COVERS

Mix into water. Apply only enough solution to wet this pot and drain; the mixing batch is not the amount to pour on.

HOW OFTEN TO FEED

Every 14 days during active growth.

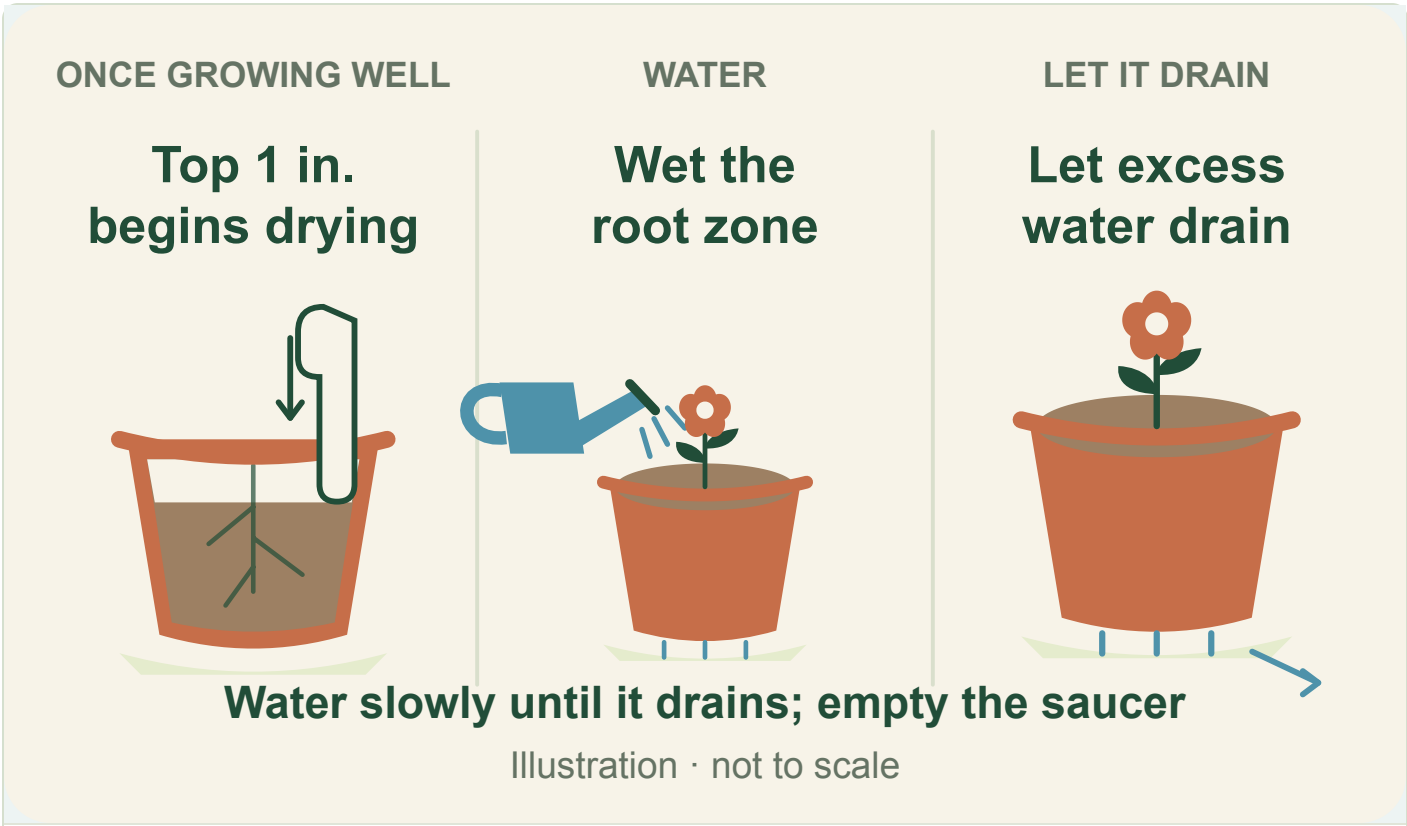
WHEN TO START OR PAUSE

No extra feed at planting in enriched mix. Follow your purchased bag for when its starter feed ends; feed only while growing and stop when the annual finishes.

01 / EVERYDAY CARE

When to water.

Check each morning. Keep the seed zone moist until sprouts appear and keep the young roots moist as they establish. Once growth is established, water when the top inch begins to dry. Pour slowly onto the mix until excess drains, then empty the saucer. Check again in hot, windy weather; daily checking is not a fixed daily watering schedule.



Check before watering. Keep the seed zone and young roots lightly moist. Once growing well, water as the top inch starts drying; wet the roots and drain. Original illustration; not to scale.

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

02 / PLANT FOOD

Exactly what to feed it.

Start with fresh enriched potting mix and no extra fertilizer at sowing. Read your purchased bag for when follow-on feeding should begin; the “up to two months” claim is not a universal wait. Do not combine this routine with another ongoing fertilizer program.



1 tablespoon in 1 US gallon of water Mix into water. Apply only enough solution to wet this pot and drain; the mixing batch is not the amount to pour on. Every 14 days during active growth. No extra feed at planting in enriched mix. Follow your purchased bag for when its starter feed ends; feed only while growing and stop when the annual finishes. Original illustration; not to scale.

US PRODUCT REFERENCE



Miracle-Gro

Water Soluble All Purpose

24-8-16

Soluble: mix into water

Check the official US product ↗

Illustrated reference; check the manufacturer's current packaging and US label.

A SPECIFIC US PRODUCT

Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (US 24-8-16)

When additional feeding is due and the plant is actively growing, dissolve 1 tablespoon of Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (US 24-8-16) in 1 US gallon of water. Apply to already moist mix every 14 days. Wet the root zone and let excess drain; the gallon is a mixing batch, not this pot's serving. Correct wilt or waterlogging first. Stop when growth and the flowering display finish; more food will not restart a finished plant. Follow your purchased US package if its directions differ.

Check the manufacturer's product page ↗

Use the named US formulation. A different product or concentration needs different directions. The amount mixed is a batch, not a dose to pour into one pot.

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03 / WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Sprouting and expected height

Junior seeds are listed to sprout in about 7–10 days, with mature plants roughly 2–2½ feet tall. Conditions affect size; this is a branching dwarf cultivar, not a giant seed-head sunflower.

When to sow outdoors

Junior is frost tender. Start after local frost risk has passed; a later sowing needs enough warm season left for a flowering display.

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

Something looking off?

Can I start Junior indoors?

Yes. Several weeks before your last frost, sow ½ inch deep in an individual 3–4-inch starter pot. Keep the mix moist and provide strong light. Acclimate it outdoors before moving it to the final pot after frost. Keep the root ball intact; direct sowing avoids that extra move.

How can I have flowers later in the summer?

Renee's Garden suggests repeat sowings three weeks apart. Use a separate pot for each batch rather than crowding new seeds around the existing plant. Check that your location still has enough frost-free growing time.

Will the same plant return next spring?

No. Junior is an annual sunflower. Start a new plant for the next season; protecting a finished plant from frost does not make it a perennial. Keep the variety name so you can buy the same compact type again.

Pot spacing and seedling protection

Give one dwarf sunflower room to grow

Renee's Garden allows one Junior in an 8-inch pot, or three in a pot 12 inches wide and 12–18 inches deep. Our one-plant version gives you more room to check moisture and handle the plant. It is a beginner layout, not a tested minimum or a recipe for a giant sunflower.

Protect new seedlings from birds

Watch newly emerging plants for bird damage. If you use a small protective cover, remove it before foliage becomes crowded and keep checking moisture underneath.

Help with your next step.

Compare flowers for your outdoor space

See alternatives if you would rather start with a flowering plant than sunflower seeds.

Learn how to check a container before watering

Use moisture and drainage to guide watering instead of a fixed daily amount.

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.

- Renee's Garden: Junior cultivar and container sowing directions ↗
  https://www.reneesgarden.com/products/sunflower-container-junior
- NC State: annual sunflower light, habit, and life cycle ↗
  https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/helianthus-annuus/
- Illinois Extension: container feeding ↗
  https://extension.illinois.edu/container-gardens/fertilizing
- Manufacturer: starter feed in the named potting mix ↗
  https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/potting-mix/miracle-gro-organic-potting-mix/78951430.html
- Manufacturer: US fertilizer formula and application directions ↗
  https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/plant-food-and-care/miracle-gro-water-soluble-all-purpose-plant-food.html
- Iowa State: checking moisture in outdoor containers ↗
  https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/care-plants-growing-containers

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.