

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

From Seed to Harvest: A beginner's guide to growing Poppies

Poppies are an annual planted each spring that will bring a burst of color to the garden. Once planted, Poppies are easy to care for. They are assumed to come in colors of red, but they also come in colors of white, pink and orange. Poppies come in both single and double blooms. Oftentimes, the red Poppy is used to symbolize fallen warriors and it commemorates Veteran's Day.

To plant:

Poppies should be sown directly into the garden because they grow from a taproot, which makes the Poppy not a good transplant flower. If the taproot is disturbed during transplanting, the Poppy will die. If you must start the Poppy seeds indoors, use peat pots that can be directly planted into the garden so the Poppy taproot isn't disturbed. Direct sow the Poppy seeds outside in a poor to average soil. Barely cover the seeds, or leave them on the surface of the soil. If you live in Zones 3-7, direct sow seeds outdoors in the early spring when a frost may still occur. If you live in Zones 8-10, direct sow Poppy seeds in the fall.

To grow:

When the Poppies sprout, thin them to 6 inches apart. Once Poppies are established, they do not require frequent watering. Overwatering will result in leggy and tall Poppies. They do require deadheading and removing the spent blooms can encourage more blooms to grow. Poppies self-sow, and if you don't want them to spread and sprout in surprising places, pull the plants from the ground once they have finished blooming.



[Great Red Poppy seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

To harvest:

Poppies are typically not harvested as cut flowers because their blooms will not keep for long, but their seeds can be harvested to be used as poppyseeds in cooking. If using for culinary purposes, be sure to plant the Breadseed Poppy variety. Seedpods will form after the blooms die. Once the seeds can be shaken inside the pod, the pod is ready to clip off the plant. Cut the pods open and spread the seeds out in a single layer and let dry for a week. Once completely dry, store in an airtight container until ready to use for baking.

What Poppies crave:

To encourage the best Poppies to grow, fertilize the Poppies once a year and then top-dress the plants with an organic material, such as manure. Fertilize the Poppies with a slow-release granular fertilizer in the spring once the soil is warm enough to be worked. Follow the dosage instructions on the fertilizer, and then mix the fertilizer in with



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the top inch of soil. After you fertilize, add a top-dressing of organic material like manure or compost. Make sure the organic material is a few inches thick. After applying the fertilizer and compost, water the plants deeply. Since compost is applied, mulch is not needed as the compost will prevent weeds and continuously provide nutrients to the Poppy plant.

Where to buy Poppy seeds:

Urban Farmer offers a variety of Poppy seeds in the colors of orange, red, pink, white and more.

Check out our Poppy seed selection on our website at ufseeds.com!



[California Poppy seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)



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