

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

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

Rudbeckias are a very popular flower in most gardens. They vary in color from green, yellow, orange, brown and red petals. Rudbeckia also are known as Black-eyed Susans. They are heat and drought tolerant and are generally low-maintenance plants. They also attract bees and butterflies to the garden. Rudbeckia grow in annual and perennial varieties, but the annual varieties may self sow.

To plant:

Begin Rudbeckia seeds six to eight weeks before the last frost or direct sow them into the garden two weeks before the last frost. When starting seeds indoors, sow seeds 1/8-inch-deep in a seed-starting formula and provide bright light after planting. Seeds should germinate in 21 days or less. Once seedlings emerge, move them to a sunny windowsill or under fluorescent lights, but do not provide light for 24 hours at a time, as seedlings require a dark period as well.

To grow:

Prior to transplanting outdoors, Rudbeckia need to be hardened off. Hardening off means accustoming the plants to outdoor living. To do so, move the seedlings to a sheltered outdoor place protected from the wind and sun for a week. After hardening the Rudbeckia off, space the seedlings 12 inches apart in an area with full sun but be sure to transplant on an overcast day. Although Rudbeckia is drought tolerant, it does require water, especially in hot weather. To encourage more growth, deadhead spent blooms regularly. To grow the best flowers, be sure to weed regularly and deter weeds by spreading mulch around



[Cherry Brandy Rudbeckia seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

the base of the plant. Mulch also will help retain moisture. When plants become crowded, divide them, as blooms will diminish if overcrowded. Divide the plants every three to four years.

Perennial seed heads should be cut back in the early spring once new foliage appears. Most gardeners refrain from cutting the seed heads back in the fall because seeds provide food for birds over the winter months.

To harvest:

Rudbeckia make excellent cut flowers due to their long, strong stems and long-lasting blooms. Cut the flowers when they are fully open and place them in a vase.

What Rudbeckia craves:

When Rudbeckia are seedlings, they do not require much fertilizer. Feed the Rudbeckia when it is three or four weeks old with a starter solution, which is half strength of complete indoor houseplant food. For an



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organic approach to fertilizing Rudbeckia once it is grown, top dress the plants with well-rotted manure once a year.

Where to buy Rudbeckia seeds:

Urban Farmer sells a wide selection of Rudbeckia seeds that bloom beautiful brightly colored petals.

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



Chim Chiminee Rudbeckia seeds available at ufseeds.com



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