



New St. Monica Sunflower Tower

Start the seeds inside after Easter and plant outside around Memorial Day

Directions: (have a dinner plate and a cereal bowl handy)

1. Put the cut-out plastic milk carton **on top** of a large dinner plate to make less mess.
2. Open the sandwich bag containing potting soil. Be careful of any staples used to close the bag . Pour the soil into the bottom of the sunflower tower carton and spread out evenly. **Don't pack it hard.** Re-use the bag.
4. Open the sunflower seed envelope and take out **5** seeds. Save others for next time. Plant again same year.
5. Put the **biggest seed in the center** of the soil and press down just a little bit (not more than a fingernail deep). Put the other seeds at each of the **four corners of the dirt area** and press them down gently. Cover them with a little soil so that they are **hidden**. Put **your name** on the popsicle (tm) stick that goes inside, too.
6. Put the rod (skinny stick) with the **plastic ring-thing in the small square hole** where the handle joined the milk carton. Make sure the thin rod touches the bottom of the carton.
7. **Add water VERY slowly** to the potting soil until it starts to drip at the bottom. Don't wash the dirt off the top of the seeds. Keep them covered with dirt. Keep the carton on the plate to catch the dripping water. Then **put the bottle in a cereal bowl** like it's in a nest. It will catch spills. **Don't water too often.**
8. Put the carton next to a **very sunny window**. In just a few days the sunflowers will poke up from the dirt. They wear their own "helmets" made from the seed case. **DON'T PULL THEM OFF.** The "helmets" fall off by themselves in a few days. **See which one stays on longest.** As they grow, their heads turn towards the sun.
9. **DON'T touch** the baby sunflowers until they **reach the top** cut-out part of the plastic carton. They need to stay **INSIDE** the carton always. If you really have to touch the baby sunflower to move it inside the carton, **pinch it gently on the LEAF** to get hold of it. **NEVER TOUCH THE STEM** (the part that looks like a green straw). If you squish the stem, then the sunflower won't grow.
10. When the sunflower sticks its head out of the top of the milk carton it needs a little help to stand up tall. It needs to rest its **TOP LEAVES on the plastic ring-thing** with a handle that goes up-and-down. It's like how you hold yourself up on the edge of the swimming pool when you get tired.
11. **Move the ring-thing up** the rod as the sunflower grows taller. Use a marker pen on the rod to see how much it grows. When it reaches **halfway up the stick**, it's ready for planting. **Plant outside around Memorial Day.**
12. Dig a garden hole **wider** than **the carton bottom** so that the dirt with roots will fit just like a loose plug.
13. **PLANTING: KEEP the ring-thing collar in place.** **Lay the carton on the ground** on its "open" belly next to the garden spot where you want it to grow outside. Hold **all** the stems at their leaves. Pull out very slowly. The dirt comes out **in one big clump**. Slip it out of the carton carefully. Don't bend the stems. Put the extra dirt around the edges. The ring-thing sticks in the ground and protects from strong winds.
14. Keep the sunflower tower family together. **Don't try to pull them apart.** Stick a tall pole or rod in the ground next to the middle sunflower if the sunflowers begin to bend over or sag. Wrap the stems together around the pole with string like a very loose belt but don't squeeze them tightly.
15. **Use Sunflower Tower again next year** with seeds from this year's sunflowers. **Save seeds for birds to eat, too.**