

# SUNFLOWERS...

## Fascinating Facts

The sunflower plant reaches heights of 3 to 18 feet within just 90 to 100 days and produces a seed head with up to 2,000 seeds arranged in a spiral pattern.

The sunflower  
has heliotropic  
behaviors,  
meaning always  
turns their face  
toward the sun,  
which is a great  
metaphor for  
looking toward  
the future with  
hope.

Sunflowers are resilient and able to grow in harsh environments, such as dry and rocky soil. They grow out of the darkness and into the light, moving through challenging times with not much light. Yet they make it. This ability to thrive in tough conditions is a powerful symbol of hope and perseverance.

## I HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

An emerging technology called rhizofiltration, hydroponically grown sunflowers are grown floating over water. Their extensive root systems reach deep into sources of polluted water and extract large amounts of toxic metals, including uranium. The roots were able to extract 95% of the radioactivity in the water left behind by the accident at Chernobyl.

Sunflowers are often used to symbolize new beginnings, growth, and renewal. This makes them a perfect symbol of hope, as they represent the idea of starting fresh and growing toward a brighter future.

**“Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow. It’s what sunflowers do.”**

*Helen Keller*



The Bonsai technique was used to make the shortest mature sunflower record. The sunflower was just over 2” tall.

**I AM ROYAL**

In Peru, the Aztecs worshipped sunflowers. They did so by placing sunflower images made of gold in their temples and crowning princesses in the bright yellow flowers.

The tallest sunflower was grown in the Netherlands by M. Heijmf in 1986 and was 25’ 5.5” tall.

## I AM MANY

The yellow petals are actually the protective leaves that cover the head while it is growing. That brown center is made up of hundreds of individually growing flowers, where a sunflower seed will emerge.

**I LIKE EVERYBODY**  
Within the last few years, a new form of low-pollen sunflower has been created to help reduce the risk of asthma for pollen sufferers.

## I HAVE POTENTIAL

Sunflower oil can be made into plastics, and research has also revealed that it the potential to create fuel for automobiles and other machinery.

## I AM ANCIENT!

The sunflower was domesticated from wild sunflowers around 1000 B.C. by Native Americans. It was ground into flours for making breads and soups, while sunflower oil softened leather, salved wounds, and conditioned hair.

## I BRING THE WORLD TOGETHER

Brought to the U.S. in 1996 from Russia, one of the largest areas of sunflower growth in the world, is in the former Soviet Union, which is second only to Argentina. The simple prairie sunflower, native to North America, is now one of the worlds leading oil seed crops behind soy beans.

Sunflowers are a bright yellow, and research suggests people who were surrounded by brighter and more vibrant colors reported higher levels of positive emotions, such as happiness and excitement.



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