



Fun Facts About Sunflowers

Each sunflower is actually thousands of teeny flowers.

The blossom of the sunflower is called a head. The yellow petals and fuzzy brown centers are actually individual flowers themselves. As many as 2,000 can make up the sunflower bloom. The petals we see on the outside of the bloom are called ray florets. The centers of the bloom are called disc florets, this is where the seeds develop.

Each sunflower can contain as many as 1,000 to 2,000 seeds. Sunflower seeds develop in the middle section of the flower called the ovary. Sunflower seeds are used to grow the flowers but they are also used as food for birds and humans. You can harvest and roast them for a healthy snack.

There are two types of sunflower seeds. Oilseed and non-Oilseed.

Oilseeds are used for bird food and can also be crushed and squeezed to get the oil out. This process is called “extraction”. Sunflower oil can be used for cooking, skin care for humans, and is even used to produce some medicines.

Non-oilseeds are for humans to eat. The most common way to eat them is to roast them with a little bit of salt.

Sunflowers are native to North America. Like potatoes, tomatoes, and corn, sunflowers were first grown in North America over 5000 years ago.

There are about 70 species of sunflowers. Their scientific name is *Helianthus* (which comes from the Greek words for "sun" and "flower"). Sunflowers can be different shapes, and some can be tall while others are short. The shortest sunflowers are called dwarfs and usually grow in clusters. Sunflowers can even be different colors. Yellow is the most common but there are also red, orange and purple sunflowers.

The tallest sunflower on record was over 30 feet tall. In the summer of 2014, the tallest sunflower ever recorded was grown in Germany and measured 30 feet, 1 inch. This was confirmed by [Guinness World Records](#) on August, 28 2014.

Sunflowers track the sun. The French word for sunflower is “tournesol” which means turns with the sun. Young sunflowers track the sun, which is referred to as heliotropism. At sunrise, the flower buds and young blossoms will face east and follow the sun during the day. At sunset, the bloom will be facing the west. However, as

the flower grows, the head of the plant becomes heavier and the blossom will generally stay facing east.



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Sunflowers are a multi-purpose plant. Sunflowers seeds are a healthy snack, they can produce a useful oil, and provide a nutritious food for birds. Sunflowers have been found to be good at absorbing toxins, too. Millions were planted after the devastating Fukushima nuclear power plant accident in Japan.

Once the flower heads are dry, they can be converted into scrubbing pads.

Just like peanuts can be ground to make peanut butter, sunflower seeds



ground to make sunflower seed butter. An interesting fact about sunflower seed butter is that it has more minerals than peanut butter and significantly less saturated fat.

Sources: proflower.com, mentalfloss.com, goodhousekeeping.com, creativecaincabin.com, www2.palomar.edu