



*My summer  
home is the  
fairest of all  
With a morning  
glory roof  
and sunflower  
walls!*

LOVEJOY

Sharon Lovejoy wrote the book *Sunflower Houses* over 20 years ago but the themes still resonate today. Inviting children into the garden to explore, learn and most of all have fun can lead to a life time of enjoyment.

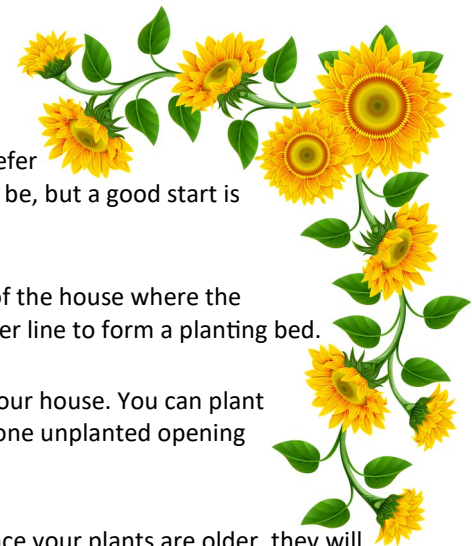
We need to rethink the line “come **work** in the garden” to come **play** in the garden!

Children may be much more interested in the worm that wiggles up through the soil or the ladybug resting on a leaf than planting the seeds.

Rather than trying to refocus them, go where they lead!

Few projects will bring your children or grandchildren into the garden more than a place of their own.

Below is a plan for a Sunflower House thanks to the National Garden Bureau



## Instructions for your Sunflower House:

**Begin by picking out a good spot to grow [sunflowers](#).** Sunflowers grow best in full sun and prefer moist but well-drained soil. Your sunflower house can be any size or shape you want it to be, but a good start is to plant one covering an area 4' x 4'.

**1. Next, create the house outline by sprinkling flour on the ground** to mark the perimeter of the house where the sunflower “walls” will grow. Clear the weeds and grass in a 6-12” wide area along this perimeter line to form a planting bed.

**Now plant the seeds in this cleared area.** The [large plants](#) that grow will form the “walls” of your house. You can plant seeds in a single row or in multiple rows to create thicker “walls.” Make sure to leave at least one unplanted opening big enough to serve as your doorway.

- 1. Water your seeds and keep the soil moist**, especially while the baby plants are young. Once your plants are older, they will grow deep roots and be able to handle drier conditions.
- 2. When the plants have a few sets of leaves**, gently place mulch around them to help keep the weeds and grass from growing back and competing with your sunflowers.
- 3. Depending on the variety of sunflower you planted**, plants will begin to produce flowers in 7 to 12 weeks.
- 4. Time to play!** Let your kids decorate and furnish the house by adding a stone doorstep or maybe chairs and a table for visiting with friends. Let them explore and play in the house during outdoor time.

**Once the seeds begin to ripen**, you may want to harvest them, snack on them yourself or share them with the birds.

- If you'd like a roof of blue flowers, plant blue morning glories at the base of each sunflower stalk when they are about 6” high. As the morning glories grow, allow them to wrap around the sunflower stalk. When the sunflowers first start to produce their flower head, gently weave a string from one head to another across the “roof” of your sunflower house. As the morning glories continue to grow, they will follow the string, forming a flowering roof.



Photo Credit : cmfpassport

Add a little fence, gate and mailbox for more whimsy!