

Salvia Seeds

- Zone 3-8
- Full Sun, Part Sun
- Height 12"-14"
- Bloom Season Summer to First Frost
- Annual
- Features Attracts Bees, Hummingbirds, Butterfly's
- Life Cycle Perennial, Annual
- Soil Well drained

If you are looking for variety, you have come to the right flower. There are over 700 species of this plant that originated in warm and temperate climates. There are annual and perennial varieties aplenty.

Spiky flowers are borne on bushy plants. Sizes generally range from 10" to 60", with most varieties below 36". You most likely know, and readily recognize, the bright red and scarlet Salvia. But, the flowers are also found in most colors, including blue.

How to Sow and Plant Salvia

Salvia may be grown from seed sown early indoors and transplanted outside after frost, sown directly in the garden in summer, or grown from potted plants.

Sowing Salvia Seeds Indoors

- Sow indoors **10-12 weeks** before the last frost.
- Barely press the seeds into seed starting formula.
- Keep the soil evenly moist at 70 degrees F.
- Seedlings emerge in **15-21 days**.
- As soon as seedlings emerge, provide plenty of light on a sunny windowsill or grow seedlings 3-4 inches beneath fluorescent plant lights turned on 16 hours per day, off for 8 hours at night. Raise the lights as the plants grow taller. Incandescent bulbs will not work for this process because they will get too hot. Most plants require a dark period to grow, do not leave lights on for 24 hours.
- Seedlings do not need much fertilizer, **feed when they are 3-4 weeks old** using a starter solution (half strength of a complete indoor houseplant food) according to manufacturer's directions.
- If you are growing salvia in small cells, you may need to transplant the seedlings to 3 or 4 inch pots when seedlings have at least 2 pairs of true leaves before transplanting to the garden so they have enough room to develop strong roots.
- Before planting salvia out in the garden, seedling plants need to be "hardened off". Accustom young plants to outdoor conditions by moving them to a sheltered place outside for a week. Be sure to protect them from wind and hot sun at first. If frost threatens at night, cover or bring containers indoors, then take them out again in the morning. This hardening off process toughens the plant's cell structure and reduces transplant shock and scalding.

Sowing Salvia Seeds directly in the Garden

- Direct sow after all danger of frost in **full sun** in a well-drained but moisture retentive soil
- Remove weeds and work organic matter into the top **6-8 inches of soil**; then level and smooth.
- Sow seeds evenly and thinly and barely cover with fine soil.

- Keep evenly moist.
- Seedlings will emerge in **15-21 days**.
- Thin to **12-18 inches apart** when seedlings are about 2 inches tall.

How to Grow Salvia

Keep weeds under control during the salvia growing season. Weeds compete with plants for water, space and nutrients, so control them by either cultivating often or use a mulch to prevent their germination.

- Mulches also help retain soil moisture and maintain even soil temperatures. For perennials, an organic mulch of aged bark or shredded leaves lends a natural look to the bed and will improve the soil as it breaks down in time. Always keep mulches off a plant's stems to prevent possible rot.
- **Careful watering is essential in getting salvia perennials off to a good start.** Water thoroughly at least once a week to help new roots grow down deeply. Soil should be damp at about 1 inch below the soil surface. You can check this by sticking your finger in the soil. Water early in the morning to give all leaves enough time to dry. One inch of rain or watering per week is recommended for most perennial plants. You can check to see if you need to add water by using a rain gauge.
- Until plants become established, some protection from extreme winds and direct, hot sunlight may be necessary. Good air movement is also important.
- After new growth appears, a light fertilizer may be applied. **Keep granular fertilizers away from the plant crown and foliage to avoid burn injury.** Use low rates of a slow release fertilizer, as higher rates may encourage root rots.
- "Deadhead", remove spent flower heads to encourage continuous flowering and prevent seed development.
- **Remove and discard foliage after a hard frost in fall.**
- **In colder regions, apply another layer of mulch** (1-2 inches) after the ground freezes in fall. Evergreen boughs (from Christmas trees) provide additional protection. Remove this mulch in the spring.