

## **Alyssum**

### **Sowing Indoors (to get a head start):**

- For best results use sterile, disease free and weed free soil to start your seedlings.
- Sow indoors, 0.5cm deep, in trays of compost 3 to 4 seeds for cell.
- Water well and place in a warm position.
- A temperature of 10-15°C is ideal for germination.
- Seedlings emerge in 14 to 28 days.
- Allow soil to dry out slightly before watering again.

### **Sowing Outdoors:**

- For best results use sterile, disease free and weed free soil to start your seedlings.
- Sow seeds in damp, mineral rich soil.
- Sow 0.5cm deep, directly into finely-prepared, well-drained soil.
- Seedlings usually appear in 14-28 days.
- Place in full Sun or part sun.

### **Transplanting in the Garden:**

- Transplant seedlings as a bundle, do not separate cells, 5cm apart, when large enough to handle, usually between 12 to 15 weeks old.
- Before planting 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.
- Dig a hole for each plant large enough to accommodate the root ball.
- Carefully remove the plant from its pot or seedling tray and gently loosen the root ball with your hands to encourage good root development.
- Fill the planting hole with soil to the top and press soil down firmly with your hand leaving a slight depression around the plant to hold water.
- Use a plant tag as a location marker.
- Water thoroughly, so that a puddle forms in the saucer you have created. This settles the plants in, drives out air pockets and results in good root-to-soil contact.

### **Growing Tips**

- Keep weeds under control during the 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 seeds from germinating.
- Mulches also help retain soil moisture and maintain even soil temperatures.
- Keep plants well-watered during the growing season, especially during dry spells. Plants need about 2cm to 5cm of rain per week during the growing season. Use a rain gauge to check to see if you need to add water. It's best to water with a drip or trickle system that delivers water at low pressure at the soil level. If you water with overhead sprinklers, water early in the day so the foliage has time to dry off before evening, to minimise disease problems. Keep the soil moist but not saturated.

- Monitor for pests and diseases. Check with your local Garden Centre for pest controls recommended for your area.
- Keep weeds under control during the 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 seeds from germinating.
- When the first flowers fade, trim back the plants to encourage continuous blooms of colour.