

## Zinnia

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

- For best results use sterile, disease free and weed free soil to start your seedlings.
- Plants prefer fertile, free draining soil and an open, sunny position.
- Sow indoors in trays of compost.
- Place in a greenhouse, cold frame or keep indoors at approximately 15°C.
- Transplant seedlings 5cm apart to other trays when large enough to handle.
- Gradually accustom young plants to outside conditions, before carefully planting out 20cm apart, when frosts are over.

### **Sowing Outdoors:**

- For best results use sterile, disease free and weed free soil to start your seedlings.
- Sow outdoors where they are to flower, 0.5cm deep, directly into finely prepared soil which has already been watered.
- Thin seedlings to 20cm apart.
- Water well until plants are established.

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

- For best results use sterile, disease free and weed free soil to start your seedlings.
- Dig a hole that is the same depth as your seedling and approximately twice as wide.
- Space seedlings approximately 20 cm apart.
- Place your seedling into the hole, bring the soil closer and be sure not to plant the seedlings deeper than the root ball – the top of the root ball should be at the same level as your hole.
- Always give your seedlings a slight water after transplanting to remove air bubbles and settle your seedlings into their forever home

### **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.
- This is especially important for tomatoes as their roots may be easily damaged when weeding, and this can lead to blossom end rot.
- 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.