



GROWING CALIFORNIA POPPIES

A bright yellow/orange single flower of the Papaveracea (Poppy) family that became the state flower of California in 1890. It is quick to flower and will do so profusely for a long period of the summer until it sets seed. A real pleasure to have in the garden, especially in low-maintenance areas as it will just get on with doing its thing.

Seed Sowing

Just scatter the seeds in Sept/Oct or April by hand over your weed free seedbed or use shallow drills 20cm apart. Sow seeds thinly and cover with a thin layer of soil or sand. Grow in well drained, fertile soil in full sun.

Transplanting

Unless stated on the packet, poppies are best sown directly in the ground. Poppies benefit from some space, so it's good to thin them to 20cm between plants once they are established, but this is not essential. Sowing them in drills makes it easier to hoe them once established.

Plant Care

Keep the area weed-free and watered during hot spells. You can mulch around the plants to keep in moisture and prevent weeds. Deadhead to prolong flowering. California poppies are drought tolerant and do best in poor soil.

Challenges

Generally pest and disease-free, they can usually be left to do their own thing. Some things to look out for are aphids and powdery mildew.

Harvest

You can expect flowers between June and October. Pick the flowers often to encourage more flowers to form; they should keep flowering from June well into the autumn. California poppies have a short vase life and aren't best suited as cut flowers but will last about 3 days when arranged.

Culinary Ideas And Uses

No parts of the plant are edible.

Seed Saving

California poppies will self seed in situ if left to flower and set seed. To harvest the seeds wait until the seeds turn a dark brown on the plant and the pods begin to rattle. A seam on the seed pod will begin to be visible as they dry. Harvest individual heads and place in a bag to collect the seeds as the pods open.

Store in a cool dark place; seeds should remain viable for up to 10 years.