

# HARDY ANNUALS *for* CUT FLOWERS

**A Southern Hemisphere  
Growing Guide**



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# INTRODUCTION



One of the great joys of gardening and flower farming is harvesting the very first flowers of spring.

Many of these early blooms come from a group of plants known as hardy annuals. These flowers tolerate cold temperatures and can be sown in autumn, allowing them to establish strong root systems and grow slowly through the colder months. By the time spring arrives, these plants are already well established and ready to produce flowers weeks earlier than many spring-sown crops. Many of these varieties can be sown again in late winter to provide a succession crop later in the growing season.

On our flower farm, we rely heavily on hardy annuals to produce early stems for cutting. Flowers such as larkspur, sweet peas, cornflowers, and poppies bring colour, movement, and texture to bouquets when very little else is flowering.

Hardy annuals are some of the most rewarding flowers to grow. Many are easy to sow, thrive in cool conditions, and produce generous stems for cutting.

In this guide, we share the hardy annual flowers we grow for our cut flower farm. The information can be used for home gardeners as well.

The sowing times described in this guide are suited to growers in the Southern Hemisphere or regions with a similar climate. Understanding your own climate and seasonal patterns is essential when deciding when to sow seeds.

You do not need a large space to grow these flowers. A small sunny patch with healthy soil can produce an abundance of beautiful stems throughout spring.



# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- This guide has been created for both flower farmers and home gardeners growing in cool-to-temperate climates.
- It is designed to be used as a practical, seasonal reference rather than something to read from start to finish.
- We recommend beginning with the seasonal calendar to understand when to sow hardy annuals in your climate. From there, use the individual plant profiles to guide your sowing, spacing, and harvesting decisions.
- Each plant has slightly different requirements, particularly when it comes to germination, spacing, and harvesting stage. Refer back to these profiles as your plants grow.
- Start small. Choose a few varieties and grow them well. Over time, you will learn what performs best in your conditions.
- Understanding your local climate is key. Adjust sowing times based on your frost dates and seasonal patterns.

# SWEET PEAS

*Lathyrus odoratus*

Sweet peas are loved for their soft colours, delicate petals, and heavenly scent. They are a staple for both gardeners and cut flower growers.

They grow best when sown in the cooler months and require support as climbing plants.

Tips: Cut stems long, including the foliage. Sweet peas respond well to a good trim, and regular picking encourages more flowers.

Favourite varieties: Nimbus, Elegance Salmon Cream, Heavenly Scent.

- SOWING:** Direct sow or start in trays in autumn or late winter. Cover seeds.
- SPACING:** 20 cm
- PINCHING:** Pinch after three sets of leaves
- HARVEST STAGE:** Harvest when the first flower opens

