

FUN SUNFLOWER FACTS

The sunflower is a large inflorescence, this means the flower head is actually made of many tiny flowers called florets. Central florets look like the centre of a normal flower while the outer florets look like yellow petals and together they make up a "false flower". This natural design helps insects and birds to easily see the sunflower and after pollination every little flower or floret produces a seed.

The stem of a sunflower can grow up to 3 m (10 ft) tall and the flower head can be 30 cm (11.8 in) wide.

Sunflowers are very fast growing plants, in the right conditions they can grow 8-12 feet (2.4 m - 3.7 m) tall in six months.

As of 2012, the Guinness World Record for the tallest sunflower is 8.23 m (27 ft) for a sunflower grown in Germany.

Famous Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh did a series of paintings featuring and called Sunflowers.

There are two kinds of sunflower seeds. Sunflower oil which is used in cooking and in margarines is made from black seeds and snack food is made from the striped seeds. The seeds can also be used as bird feed.

Sunflowers can also be processed into a peanut butter substitute called Sunbutter. In Germany, sunflower seeds are mixed with rye flour to make a type of bread (Sonnenblumenkernbrot).

The sunflower is native to the America's and was used extensively by Native American Indians for food, as oil, in bread, medical ointments, dyes and body paints.

Kansas is often known as the Sunflower state and the flower is in fact Kansas's state flower. The sunflower is also the national flower of Ukraine.

Sunflowers can be used to extract toxin such as lead, arsenic and uranium from contaminated soil. For example, sunflowers were used to remove toxins from a pond after the Chernobyl disaster and similar projects took place after the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

It is a misconception that flowering sunflower heads track the Sun across the sky during the day.