



Today we planted *Mammoth* Sunflower seeds. These sunflowers can grow to 12 feet high! Please place these sprouting cups in a spot with lots of sun, and give them water daily. Sprouts should emerge in 7-14 days. (Each Jiffy pot has three planted seeds in case there are any "dud" seeds.) Once you're ready to transfer them outside, you can plant these cups directly into the ground and the roots will grow right through them. They should be planted in full sun, about 12" apart. According to the package, seeds should be ready to harvest from the flower in 80 days. Harvest is recommended when the flower heads are dry. Continue to air-dry the heads in large paper bags for 2-3 weeks. Seeds are edible, or can be saved to plant next year!

These plants offer several learning activities you and your child (or your whole family) can enjoy together throughout the summer. Simply recognizing what a plant needs to be able to grow, and caring for the plant by watering and weeding around it are learning experiences in themselves. With a plant that grows to 12 feet in 80 days, you can also incorporate several math, science and language activities. I've listed a few ideas here.

The seeds we planted were this big: [tape seed here](#)

You may want to remind your child how small the seed was to begin with, and have him/her compare the size of the seed to the continually increasing size of the sunflower plant. You could measure it with an actual measuring tape and create a chart or graph. You could also make relative measurements (as tall as 4 seeds, twice as tall as I am, etc.).

Taking pictures of your child standing next to the plant as it grows is a good way to document the change in size relative to your child's size. You could write down a sentence or two as dictated by your child to go with each picture, creating a book (while also incorporating great prereading skills). When the seeds are produced by the sunflower, you can talk about the life cycle of the plant (seed, seedling, plant, flower, seeds), and even draw it out.

You could check out some great books on seeds, gardening, or sunflowers from the library to connect with this experience. The one we read in class with this activity was One Little Seed, by Elaine Greenstein. Another fantastic choice would be the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. You and your child (or your whole family) could extend the story by creating and writing down a story about what would happen if your sunflowers grew as tall as the beanstalk, and you climbed up!

These are just a few ideas for activities to extend the learning experience of planting "one little seed". Please don't feel like you have to do all or even any of them. My only hope is that you and your child can enjoy the excitement and satisfaction of growing something from seed to flower together!

Amanda Morgan, www.notjustcute.com