

Summary: Sunflowers are one of the easiest flowers to grow in a school garden. Not only are they beautiful, but they attract pollinators and provide a way to connect life cycle lessons through seed saving. Here is a fun way to improve fine motor skills by using tweezers to remove seeds from a sunflower head.

Length: 15-30 minutes

Ages: preK-5th grade

Materials needed:

- Sunflower heads (see note below about harvesting)
- Kid-friendly tweezers
- Tray (if indoors)
- Containers for seed collection



Procedure:

1. If possible, have students assist in the collection of sunflower heads prior to the lesson. To know if the heads are ready, look for signs like the seeds being plump, the petals falling off, and the back of the flower turning brown. Cut 4" below the head and hang upside down in a dry, warm area to prevent mildew.
2. Depending on the time available, age group and prior knowledge of students involved, we recommend beginning with a book about sunflowers (such as The Sunflower House by Eve Bunting).
3. Place sunflower seed heads on the tray to keep seeds from creating a mess.
4. Demonstrate how to use the tweezers to remove the seeds from the head and place them into the collection containers.
5. Remind students to be patient, there is a learning curve involved with the tweezer use.
6. Considering the season and future use plans, decide how to use the collected seeds. Ideas include roasting with salt and enjoying a fresh snack, saving for spring plantings, and feeding to local wildlife.