How to grow Poppies

Prepare the ground properly. Till up the area you want to plant poppies in. A power tiller works best but the old fashioned, shovel, pick, hoe and rake will work too. It is a good idea to add some kind of organic fertilizer to the soil. Cow manure is best however it will come with a lot of weeds. Chicken manure that has been allowed to rest for at least a year is also recommended. Once you have prepared the ground, it is time to plant your seeds.

There are two times of the year that are best for planting poppy seeds. The Spring and Fall. Poppies are a very hardy plant and they like the cold. So plant your seeds just after you think the last snow has fallen. If it does not snow where you live, plant the seeds in the middle of February. It's easy, just sprinkle or broadcast the seeds where you want them to grow. If you live in a dry climate, be sure to water on a regular basis. The seeds should come up between seven and twenty five days, depending on your weather conditions. The seeds will come up everywhere you planted them. Because the seeds are so small, some people like to sow the seeds with a mixture of sand and seed, then broadcast the seeds that way. You will find they won't be crowded so close together. You can plant them in rows or just plant them everywhere.

Some people like to thin the plants from eight to ten inches apart when the seedlings reach a height of five to six inches. If you do thin out the plants, the remaining poppies will fill out more and produce more seed pods per plant. When the plants are ten inches tall start to fertilize with a liquid fertilizer. Alaskan fish fertilizer works well for the organic gardener. Or you can use Miracle Grow, a common vegetable fertilizer. You can buy these fertilizers at your local garden store. Be sure to follow the directions on the water mix. Fertilize and water on a regular basis until you see the seed pods start to form.

Let nature take over. Your plants will grow long stems with the flower and seed pod at the end. The flowers last from three to eight days, then the flower petals drop off. The plant uses all of its remaining energy to reproduce. The seed pods will grow fat with seeds and eventually the seed vents will open up to re-seed themselves. This is the time to collect the seeds for cooking. Save the seeds from the biggest pods for Fall planting. This is also the time to cut the long stems with their pods for dried flower arrangements.

Seed heads are frequently used in wreaths you will love the large pods. The stems dry straight and hard and can be used for a number of things such as: support sticks for other plants, use in arts and crafts, playing an ancient Chinese fortune telling game, or simple "pick-up sticks". For cooking, the seeds are a pantry necessity. Everything from poppy seed cake and muffins, to an ingredient in herbal butters and as a decorative topping on biscuits and for making a great poppy seed dressing. Many recipes can be discovered just by visiting your local library. In some countries, poppy seeds have been a staple and used to make flour and as an ingredient in most of their cooking.

For the Fall planting, plant your seeds in the middle of September and prepare the soil as I have indicated above. Poppies are very hardy, they should winter over just fine. However just in case, save about half your seeds for the Spring planting.

Poppies are beautiful plants and are a show piece for any garden. However, they do contain alkaloids that are a narcotic. It may be illegal in your area to grow opium poppies. Check your local laws. It is definitely illegal to harvest the raw opium these plants produce .I am selling these seeds to you strictly for beautification and the decorative and cooking aspects of them. Once you start your own garden of these beauties, you will never need to buy seeds again!

The history of these flowers is incredibly interesting and their wonderful versatility make these a very productive plant to own. I hope you enjoy these beautiful ancient flowers.