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Sunflower farming is popular in many countries and is very simple to start and operate. Sunflower is cultivated mostly in temperate and tropical regions as food crops for humans, cattle and poultry.
Sunflower oil is a premium oil and its consumption is increasing globally. Consuming sunflower seeds or oil has numerous health benefits: it is a great source of calories, fats, saturated fats, monounsaturated fat, polyunsaturated fat, fibre, protein, vitamins, and minerals. The seeds are known for their high nutritional value and distinct nutty taste. Sunflowers generally grow during the summer and early fall, with a peak growing season of mid-summer. The plant thrives in deep fertile loam soils with good drainage and irrigation facilities. The sunflower plant requires exposure to full sun.

Seed sowing

While preparing the soil, use an adequate amount of organic fertilizer. 2–3 ploughing operations followed by planting are done during seedbed preparation.
Seeds are treated and soaked for 24 hrs in water and shed dried before sowing. The seeds should be sowed at a row distance of 0.6 m and plant distance of 0.3 m at a depth of 4–5 cm.

Crop care

Irrigation should be applied one month after sowing and when

the flowering is 50% to increase yield. Avoid excessive or frequent irrigation to reduce the risk of welting and root rot attacks.
The first weeding should be done 2–3 weeks after sowing and 3 weeks after that. To protect plants from pests and diseases, organic and chemical methods are used.

Harvesting

Harvesting is done when all the leaves are dry and the back of the head turns lime yellow. Harvesting should not be delayed to avoid crop loss and termite attacks. Harvested heads should be dried well in the sun before storing.