

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

From Seed to Harvest: A beginners guide to growing chamomile

When thinking of chamomile, gardeners often think of calming tea that tastes delicious, and many gardeners may not realize that they can actually grow chamomile at home. Chamomile plants are oftentimes used as flower bed borders, grown in an herb garden or used to attract pollinators to the garden. There are two main types of chamomile plants - traditional chamomile which is usually referred to as English, Russian or Roman chamomile, and it is a low-growing perennial. There also is German chamomile, which is also known as false chamomile, and it only grows as an annual. Chamomile can reach up to two feet tall, and it produces white flowers that smell like sweet apples. It was used in ancient civilizations to cure hay fever, inflammation, insomnia and other ailments. It spreads easily and can be used as groundcover in some areas.

To plant:

Start chamomile seeds indoors three to four weeks before the last frost. To plant indoors, fill a seed starter tray with a well-draining potting mix and then scatter the chamomile seeds over the top. Then, lightly tamp the seeds down and then mist it to water them. The seeds require light to germinate so don't cover the seeds with soil upon planting.

To grow:

Thin seedlings to 2 inches apart once they reach one inch tall. Since chamomile plants don't transplant well once their roots have been established, plant them in peat pots and then plant the entire pot in the garden or just direct sow outside after the last frost. Chamomile can grow in partial shade or full sun. Many times, insects don't bother



[Chamomile seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

chamomile and it can even be used to deter cucumber pests. Sometimes, aphids and thrips can cause problems, but you can wash these off the plant with an insecticidal soap. Chamomile also grows well in pots.

To harvest:

Chamomile will produce flowers that can be harvested for their herbal uses within 6 to 8 weeks of planting. When harvesting, feel free to leave some of the seed heads and don't harvest them so the chamomile will self seed and regrow next year. When harvesting the flowers, wait until the blooms are completely open before harvesting them. Flowers can be harvested for tea, and Roman chamomile flowers and leaves can be harvested to use in potpourri.

What chamomile craves:

Since chamomile spreads so quickly and easily, it is one of the herbs that doesn't require fertilizer.



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Where to buy chamomile seeds:

You can find chamomile seeds that bloom into fragrant flowers that resemble daisies and are used to garnish desserts or drinks at ufseeds.com!



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