

AGM 2026 – Free Gifts!!!

We shall be running a **members-only class** at both shows again this year.

All those members who have attended the AGM (or who have sent their apologies) will receive two free gifts to get them started. Full growing and showing instructions will be provided. **You have no excuse not to enter!**

161st Summer Show – Members-only Class

BIGGEST BLOOM

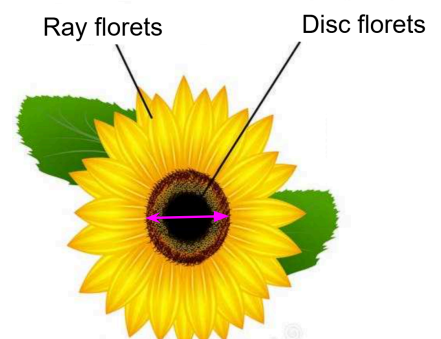
Sunflower ‘Dwarf Sunspot’ bloom with the greatest diameter
- measured across the disc florets

In the world of sunflowers, height isn't everything.

Helianthus annuus ‘Dwarf Sunspot’ grows up to only 60cm tall but can produce giant blooms measuring up to 25cm in diameter!

The blooms feature a prominent dark brown or black centre composed of numerous tiny disc florets densely packed together. Surrounding the central disc are bright golden-yellow ray florets.

A single intact bloom should be presented at the summer show. Only the **diameter of the central black disc** will be measured.



78th Autumn Show – Members-only Class

LONGEST LEEK

Longest leek grown from a ‘Bulgarian Giant’ seed.

The **Bulgarian Giant leek** (*Allium porrum*) is a true garden behemoth, capable of reaching an astounding length and boasting a mild, sweet flavor.

Your leeks will be **measured from leaf tip to root tip**. So harvest carefully to keep their roots intact.

The longest vegetable ever grown is a giant leek measuring 1.582 meters, cultivated by Peter Glazebrook. Officially recognised at the UK National Giant Vegetable Championships in Malvern in 2024.

Interestingly, Glazebrook also achieved another record at the same event for growing the heaviest sunflower head, which weighed 7.046 kilograms.



Sunflower 'Dwarf Sunspot' – Growing Instructions

- Dwarf Sunspot is an ideal choice for those with limited space or for container gardening.
- Seeds can be started indoors 3 to 4 weeks before last spring frost.

Or direct-sow seeds outside after all danger of frost has passed.

- Sowing depth: 5mm.

The soil should be moist but not waterlogged during the germination phase.

Germination generally takes 14 - 21 days.

- When seedlings are 5 - 7.5cm tall, thin to individual pots. Replant thinned plants.
- Steadily harden off the seedlings before planting out after all danger of frost has passed.

Protect from snails and slugs whilst young.

- Plant at least 30cm apart, preferably in full sun and well-drained soil.

Sunflowers are not typically greedy plants but you may wish to incorporate some compost or balanced fertiliser into the soil when planting.

- Once the plants are established, they are relatively drought-tolerant but will still benefit from regular watering, especially during dry spells.

Water deeply at the base of the plants rather than overhead to avoid wetting the foliage.

Applying a layer of mulch around the base of the plants can help retain soil moisture and suppress weeds.

- Dwarf Sunspot sunflowers are generally self-supporting but providing support can help protect them from wind damage or bending.

- Dwarf Sunspot sunflowers are known for their relatively short growing season, typically reaching maturity in around 60 to 70 days from planting out. However, this will vary according to the weather conditions.

- Harvest the bloom with the largest diameter, measured across the centre disc, to display at the Summer Show. The remaining blooms should make great cut flowers.

Alternatively, harvest the abundant tasty seeds in the Autumn or let the birds help themselves!

Leek 'Bulgarian Giant' – Growing Instructions

- A popular North European long, thin and fast maturing variety of the highest quality with light green leaves and great flavour. One of the longest stemmed varieties available. Self-blanching.
- Bulgarian Giant leeks thrive in rich, well-drained soil in a sunny, sheltered location.
Before planting, amend your soil with compost or aged manure to improve its fertility and structure.
Ensure the pH is between 6.0 and 7.0 for optimal growth.
- Sow seeds indoors in small pots from January to March or directly outdoors from March to April.
- Sowing depth: 5 - 10mm
Germination generally takes 14 - 18 days.
- Once your seedlings emerge, provide consistent watering to keep the soil moist.
Avoid overwatering, as this can lead to root rot.
- You may wish to support the leaves with a small cane.
- When they have outgrown the small pots, pot them up into 4 - 5" pots (100 - 125mm).
- Gradually harden off your plants before moving them outside in May.
- Aim to produce pencil thick plants of around 20cm tall for transplant to their final position in June/ July.
Lift carefully. Some growers remove the top third of the foliage and 1/3 of the roots.
- Transplant into pre-made holes of 10-15cm deep, 35cm between plants.
It is advisable to stake your plants.
- Regularly remove weeds to prevent competition for nutrients and water.
- Keep the bed moist during dry weather.
- Bulgarian Giant leeks are heavy feeders. Apply a balanced or nitrogen rich fertiliser mid-season.
Some professional growers give 2 or 3 nitrogen feeds up to July (or later if the leeks are growing slowly) and then switch to phosphrogen feeds until lifting.
- Slugs may be a problem - check between the leaves as well as on the soil.
- Check for rust pustules on the leaves and cut off infected leaves promptly.
You may wish to apply a fungicide suitable for treating rust - follow the manufacturer's instructions.
Maintain good air circulation and avoid watering onto the leaves.
- Days To Harvest: 130 days.
- Lift your leeks very carefully because they will be measured from root tip to leaf tip.