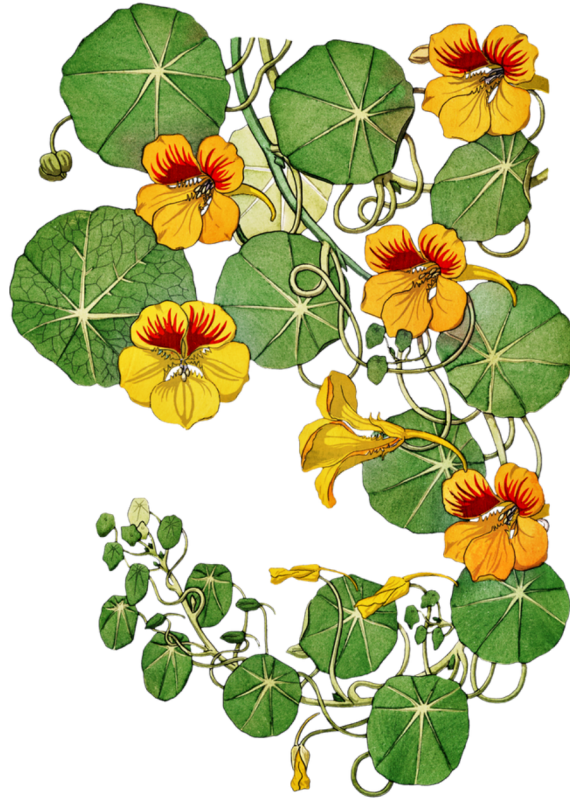


The Incredible, Edible Nasturtium



Farm School Activity Guide

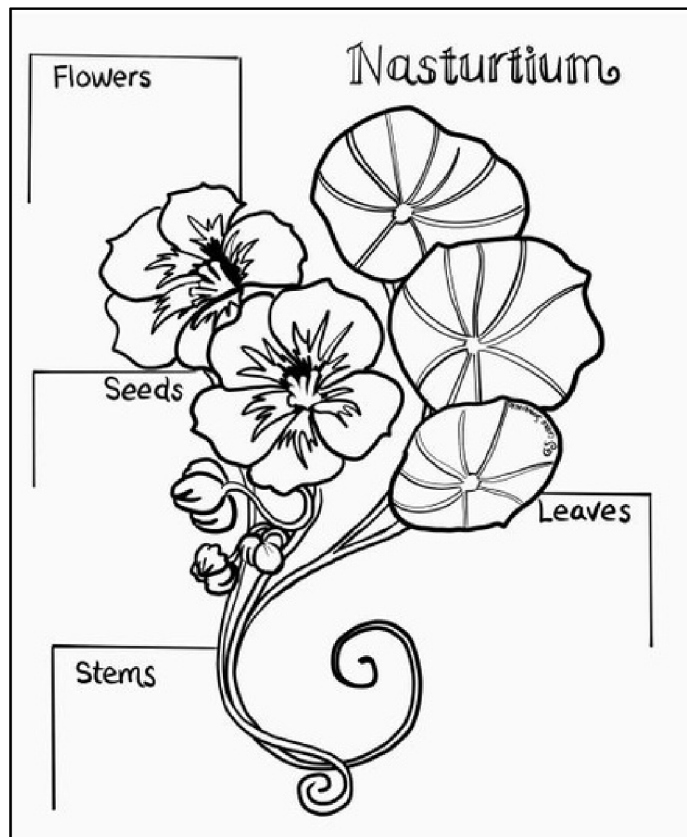


Inside this activity guide:

Nasturtium flowers are a vegetable garden's best friend. This activity guide from the Front Yard Farm School is jam packed with ideas for learning about Nasturtium and exploring this incredible, edible flower with all of your senses.

- Nasturtium Up Close
- Nasturtium Taste Test
- Coloring Page
- 10 Reasons to Plant Nasturtium
- Recipes to Try
- Planting Nasturtium Seeds
- Print at Home Stickers

This Activity Guide is meant to be tool to help families explore the wonders of Nasturtium in the garden together.



The Incredible, Edible Nasturtium

Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum Majus*) bursts onto the scene each spring, adorning gardens and hillsides with its jewel-toned flowers. This herbaceous flowering plant grows happily in regions where the sun shines for at least half the day, extending its cheerful reach from Central to South America, from Mexico to Chile.



Beloved by gardeners, nasturtium is a great companion crop that attracts **pollinators** (like bees and butterflies) while deterring pests. This enchanting flower is also ornamental and delectably edible, from the tender seed to the delicate petal.

Nasturtium Up Close

The best way to learn about plants is to observe them growing in the wild and explore them with all of your senses. If you don't have nasturtium in your garden, these flowers can often be found in sunny coastal communities or in the gardens of your friends and neighbors.

Below are a few questions to think about as you take a closer look at this helpful flower.

- What kinds of bugs do you see on or around the nasturtium?
- What does the soil feel like near the flowers?
- What does nasturtium smell like?
- Can you find any nasturtium seeds? What do they look like?

Write Down Your Observations

A simple line drawing of a quill pen, positioned in the bottom right corner of the observation box.

Nasturtium Taste Test

One of the best parts about nasturtium is that the entire plant is edible! Create an engaging taste-test experience by dissecting the plant into its distinct components - seeds, stems, leaves, and flowers. Utilize the provided coloring page to document the nuanced flavor profiles of each part and explore ideal food pairings. For instance, the leaves and flowers add a refreshing zest to salads, while the seeds offer a fiery kick comparable to wasabi.

Feeling adventurous? Dive straight into the flavor of the seeds, the boldest expression of the plant's spiciness. Prefer a gentler introduction? Sample the sweet, subtly spiced essence of the flower.



Upon completing your gastronomic exploration, proudly display your "I Ate a Flower" sticker. Bragging rights earned!

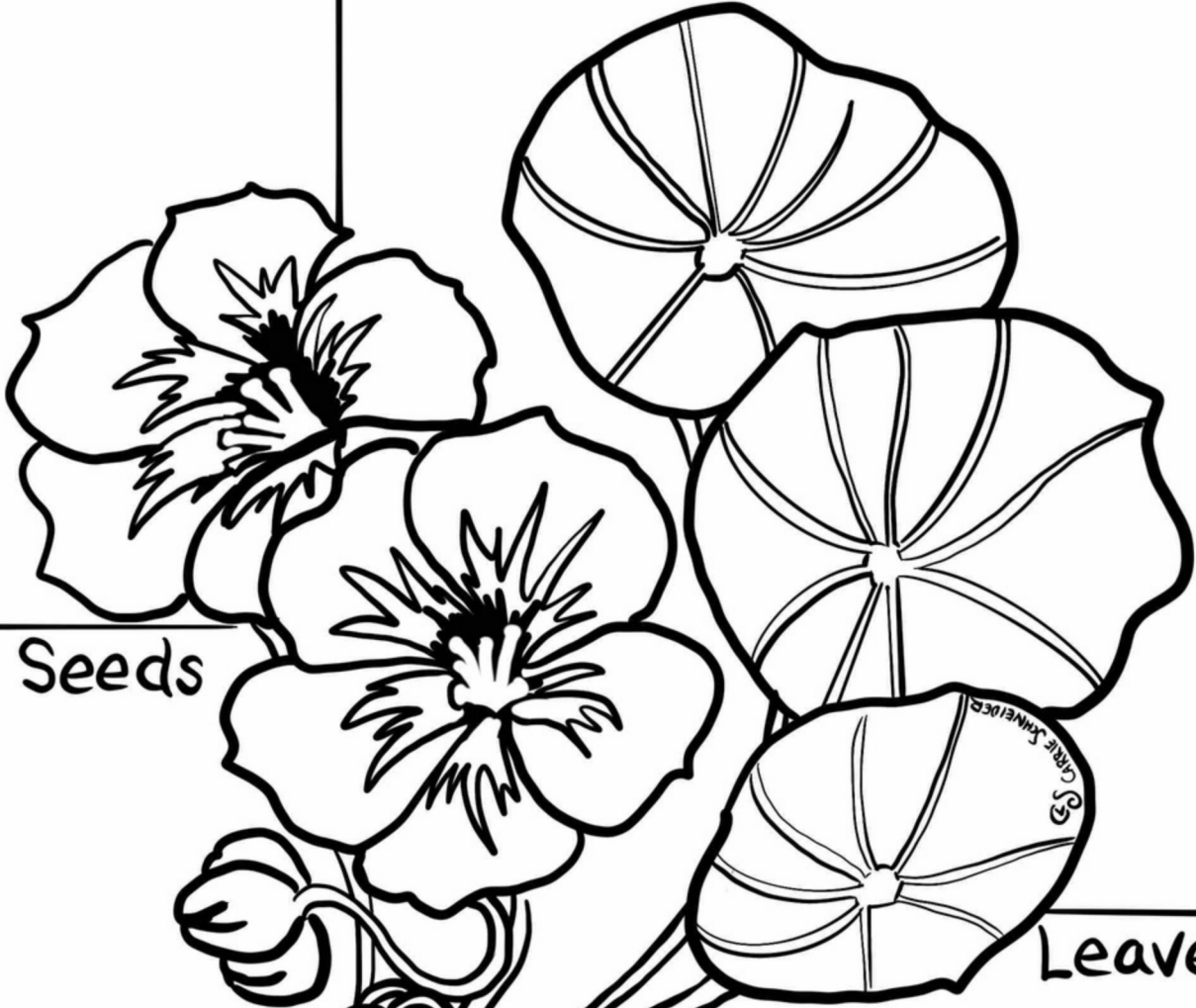


A Note on Seed Harvesting

When harvesting nasturtium seeds for consumption, opt for those that are vibrant green in color. Seeds that have transitioned to white or brown are in the process of germination and will possess a tough, woody texture (and taste terrible). For seeds intended for planting or sharing, allow them to dry in a sunny location until they have hardened and turned brown. This indicates that they are ready for storage or sowing.

Nasturtium

Flowers



Seeds

Leaves

Stems

10 Reasons to Plant Nasturtium



1. **Pollinator Paradise:** Nasturtiums boast vibrant flowers that attract beneficial pollinators.
2. **Pest-Repellent Powerhouse:** Nasturtiums emit chemicals that deter a host of garden pests from your prized vegetables.
3. **Effortless Elegance:** Nasturtiums are the epitome of low-maintenance gardening, rewarding you with lush foliage and blooms in a matter of weeks. Just add water and sun!
4. **Soil Savior:** Beneath the surface, nasturtium roots work wonders aerating the soil, while their foliage acts as a natural mulch to locking in essential moisture.
5. **Companion Champions:** Nasturtiums are the ultimate garden allies, safeguarding neighboring veggies from pests and enhancing their flavor.
6. **Nutrient-Rich Nourishment:** Eating their greens provides you with a dose of Vitamin C and an array of vital minerals.
7. **Immune-Boosting Wonder:** Incorporating nasturtiums into your diet provides a natural immune system boost, fortifying your defenses against seasonal bugs.
8. **Sustainable Splendor:** With self-seeding capabilities, nasturtiums will grace your garden with their colorful blooms year after year.
9. **Naturally Weed-Free:** Nasturtiums make the perfect ground cover to effortlessly suppress weed growth, maintaining a tidy garden bed while enhancing its visual appeal.
10. **Edible Excellence:** From seed to petal, every part of the nasturtium plant is not only safe to eat, but also adds a delightful peppery flavor to culinary creations.



Recipes to Try

Nasturtium Flower Salad Dressing

Supplies needed:

- 8oz Mason jar with lid

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup washed nasturtium flowers (pesticide free)
- 1 cup distilled white vinegar (Apple Cider Vinegar works, too, but your colors won't be as vibrant)
- 2 tablespoons honey
- Chopped garlic (based on preference)

Directions:

1. Wash and drain nasturtium flowers, pat dry.
2. Remove any remaining stems or leaves and lightly press flowers into the bottom of a clean mason jar.
3. Add garlic (and any additional spices of your choosing).
4. Pour vinegar into the jar, filling almost to the top.
5. Cover with lid and store in the fridge for two weeks (gently shake on occasion).
6. After two weeks, strain out flowers and enjoy this colorful dressing on your favorite salad! Dressing should be enjoyed within 6-8 months.



Nasturtium Seed Refrigerator Pickles

Supplies:

- 8oz Mason jar with lid

Ingredients:

- 1 cup washed nasturtium seeds (pesticide free)
- 1/3 cup distilled white vinegar (apple cider vinegar works, too)
- 1/3 cup water
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon pickling spices
- 2-3 Fresh sprigs of dill

Directions:

1. Wash and drain nasturtium seeds and pour into mason jar. Add pickling spices and dill sprigs.
2. Simmer water, vinegar, salt, and sugar in a sauce pan until solids have dissolved. This is your pickling brine.
3. Once the brine has cooled, pour over seeds and cover mason jar with lid.
4. Store in the refrigerator (gently shake on occasion). Pickles will be ready to eat in two weeks and should be eaten within six months.*



*If your mason jar is pressure canned, pickles can be stored in the cupboard for 12-18 months.

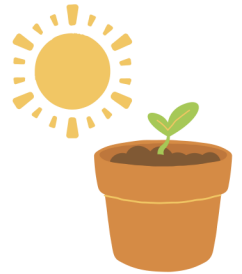
Planting Nasturtium Seeds

Nasturtium seeds are happy being planted directly in the dirt of your garden, but if you'd like to observe the growing process you can also start nasturtium seeds indoors. Wherever you choose to plant, make sure your seedlings will have access to full sun and water.

Outdoors: Plant seeds in 1/2 inch of well-draining dirt 10-12 inches apart if planting outdoors.

Indoors:

- If starting your seeds indoors, plant seeds 1/2 deep in potting soil and water well.
- Lightly cover pot with saran wrap to help retain moisture.
- Water every three days and place your seedlings in a sunny window.
- Seeds will germinate within 10-14 days.
- After seeds are about 3-4 weeks old, transplant to your garden.



Ongoing Care: Water your nasturtium every other day. Be careful not to over water. Remove dead flowers and trim regularly to promote new growth.

Harvest leaves and flowers with clippers or scissors. Never pull on the plant!



Companion Plants for Nasturtium

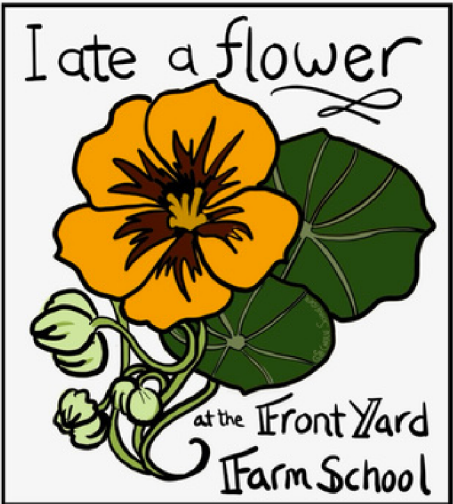
Nasturtium likes to make friends! Plant nasturtium in your vegetable garden to improve soil health, draw away pests and attract pollinators, and improve vegetable flavors!

- Broccoli/Cauliflower
- Brussel Sprouts
- Beans
- Cabbage
- Tomato/Tomatillo
- Cucumber
- Kale
- Squash
- Zucchini
- Potato
- Pumpkin



Print at Home Stickers

Ate a flower? You've earned bragging rights! Print these sticker templates at home to share what you've learned with your friends.



About the Front Yard Farm School

Our journey began in 2017 when we purchased our home and pulled up the small patch of grass the previous owners had left behind. We had dreams of a vegetable garden. We planted cherry tomatoes, strawberries, and sweet peas that first year, while watermelons spread joy throughout the neighborhood. Over time, we've added raised beds, roses, and even a clutch of quail. Despite the messes and mistakes, each season teaches us something new, making our garden greener and more bountiful.

Today, our small but mighty Front Yard Farm boasts over 45 types of plants. After successfully hosting events for our Girl Scout troop and homeschool friends, we're excited to share our garden with the community through monthly homeschool classes and online lesson plans for aspiring farm schoolers.

Our mission is to share the magic of gardening with our community. You don't need a big space or a green thumb to grow something; you just need to get messy and try.

Grab a trowel and join us on the farm!

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