

THE YEAR-ROUND POTAGER

SWEETCORN 'MINIPOP' F1



Find out how to grow this delicious and popular veg with GYO's advice

Sweetcorn is a much-loved crop to grow and eat, and this mini variety produces crunchy baby cobs for you to enjoy. Not only is this type great for experienced gardeners, it is also preferred for beginner growers who have not had any experience cultivating this crop before. This is due to the benefit of growing this variety as pollination isn't required so they can be grown in rows. Have a look through GYO's step-by-step guide for top tips on cultivating this yummy crop.



Gather all the equipment together that you will need to grow this veg. This includes the 'Minipop' F1 sweetcorn seeds (which are dried kernels), compost, small pots, a tray to keep the pots together, a trowel and a small garden watering can.

Fill the containers with good quality compost, placing them in the tray when you have done this. Put the seeds into the pots – two or even three can be sown at once in the same container as later thinning will remove the weakest specimen.

Cover over the seeds you have placed in the containers with compost – use the trowel to help put soil into the individual posts. The seeds should be at a depth of around 1cm in the earth once you have completed this, so don't add too much compost.

Water the containers when you have finished sowing the seeds. Be careful not to over-water your crops at any point however, as this is one of the most common mistakes gardeners make. It is important that the soil is moist not waterlogged.

GAP Photos

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Label the row of pots to make sure that there is no confusion as to their identity as they develop. Keep them indoors at a temperature of 18-21°C, so that they are in an ideal condition to germinate and subsequently develop tasty yields.

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As seedlings grow, if you put more than one seed in the pot then thin the specimens, leaving only the stronger plant. Make sure they are kept at a warm temperature and are benefitting from plenty of spring sunshine, so that they can grow efficiently.

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Plant crops outside during May and June, and remember to harden them off for two to three weeks before doing this. The mini varieties are harvested prior to the female tassels becoming fertilised, so are suited to being grown in rows.

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Although this variety will produce miniature crops, the plants themselves will grow to a standard size expected for sweetcorn. Make sure that they are getting sufficient water and keep checking for any signs of pests and diseases that might be present.

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The yields of this crop can be harvested from July to October. They may be taken prior to kernels forming, as this variety specifically crops mini corn, so pollination doesn't need to occur. Each plant will give around three to five cobs for you to enjoy.

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Once you have harvested the sweetcorn yields, you should then remove the husk. These mini corn cobs are packed full with delicious flavour, and can be eaten raw, such as in salads, or cooked for meals like stir-fries and tasty spring mains.

GYO'S TOP TIPS



CARING FOR YOUR CROP

Planting sweetcorn out in the right site will help this crop thrive. It is important that it gets plenty of sunshine, but also that it is positioned in a sheltered area, as this helps reduce the impact of extreme weather such as strong wind.

To help create the ideal soil conditions for sweetcorn, you can add organic matter to the earth to help increase nutrients and fertility. Two buckets of this, such as rotted manure, is sufficient. Sweetcorn favours growing in moist soil, as opposed to dry conditions. Mulch is one way of helping to keep the earth moist – use organic matter to do this. It will also help keep weeds at bay. Watering appropriately assists in reducing the problem of dry soil – this is especially needed when the weather is hot. As plants develop they may need to be staked to give them an extra bit of support to prevent them toppling over.

Keep an eye on your seedlings

When young plants are put outside they become vulnerable to attacks by slugs. Waiting until your specimens are plantlets as opposed to young seedlings before planting out is a good first step, as slugs will quickly devour tender seedlings. Try going outside during the evening with a torch to spend five minutes searching for these munching creatures and remove them from your crop. Traps, such as halved oranges with the insides removed and placed in the soil, along with the biological control 'Nemaslug' are also popular.

