

## Zinnias in Space



NASA/Scott Kelly

Picture reference:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/check-out-first-flower-grown-space-180957859/>

This flower is called a Zinnia and was grown aboard the International Space Station's (ISS) in their plant lab. The lab is sometimes called the Vegetable Production System of "Veggie" for short because they first grew vegetables. The first experiment happened in May 2014 where the astronauts grew lettuce so they could determine if food could be grown in space.

The Veggie system has red and blue LED lights, a root mat which is meant to draw in the water given to the plants. The seeds are in a plant pillow along with a type of material that contains fertilizer.

Astronaut Scott Kelly was responsible for watering the plants according to a schedule. When his experiment first started, there wasn't enough water and some plants died. Then some other plants weren't getting enough air and got moldy and died. In the end, Kelly asked NASA to allow him to watch the plants and water them when they looked like they needed water.

Did you know that you could also eat Zinnias? The Zinnia was chosen since it is hard to grow and produces a flower. Astronauts will need to be able to grow plants that flower in order to produce some foods such as a tomato.

### References:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/check-out-first-flower-grown-space-180957859/>

<https://www.nasa.gov/content/veggie-plant-growth-system-activated-on-international-space-station>