



Linseed: From Traditional Oilseed Crop to Dried Flower Enterprise

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Linseed or flax (*Linum usitatissimum* L.) is one of the oldest cultivated crops in the world and is valued for its oil-rich seeds, fibre, and numerous industrial uses. The seeds are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, protein, fibre, and antioxidants, making them increasingly popular as a health food. Linseed oil is widely used in paints, varnishes, wood finishing, printing inks, and handicrafts. In Nagaland, linseed is grown primarily as a rabi crop after the harvest of paddy as the crop is well suited to the diverse agro-climatic conditions of the state and can be cultivated under *rainfed* situations with relatively low inputs. Research and extension efforts have shown that linseed fits well into rice-based cropping systems and can help farmers utilize land during the winter season while generating additional income. Linseed is traditionally cultivated for oil production, new opportunities are emerging through value addition. One such opportunity is the production of dried flowers and decorative stems, a growing market segment that can provide farmers and rural entrepreneurs with an additional source of income.

Dried Linseed Flowers: Entering the Dried Flower Economy

The dried flower industry is gaining popularity worldwide due to the increasing demand for natural and eco-friendly decorative products. Dried flowers are widely used in home décor, bouquets, floral arrangements, handicrafts, gift packaging, weddings, and event decorations, all of which have become increasingly popular in the state in recent years. Linseed possesses attractive stems and capsules that retain their shape and appearance after drying, making it a suitable crop for the dried flower market and by utilizing the crop beyond seed production, farmers can obtain additional value from the same field.

Stage 1: Flowering Stage

The linseed crop produces delicate blue flowers that create an attractive landscape during the flowering period.

- Maintain a healthy crop through proper nutrient and weed management.
- Select uniform and vigorous plants for dried flower production.
- Avoid pest damage and lodging to ensure high-quality stems and capsules.

Stage 2: Capsule Formation Stage

After flowering, capsules begin to develop on the plants.

- Harvest planning should begin when capsules are fully formed.
- Semi-mature capsules generally provide the best quality for dried flower products.
- Uniform and healthy capsules enhance the appearance and market value of the product.

Stage 3: Harvesting and Drying

Harvesting

- Harvest plants carefully at physiological maturity when capsules have developed
- Avoid over-mature plants, as they may become brittle and lose quality.
- Harvest during dry weather conditions to minimize mould and discoloration.

Upright Drying

Air drying is one of the simplest and most economical methods for producing dried linseed flowers. Harvested plants are tied into small bundles and hung in a clean, shaded, and well-ventilated area with low humidity and the capsules are dried naturally on their stems, helping to preserve their shape and ornamental value. Depending on temperature, humidity, and air circulation, drying usually takes one to two weeks and this method requires no chemicals or specialized equipment, making it an environmentally friendly and low-cost option for farmers interested in the dried flower market. Proper drying helps maintain the natural colour, structure, and quality of the stems and capsules for decorative use.

- Tie harvested plants into small bundles.
- Place the bundles upright in a shaded, clean, and well-ventilated area.
- Allow drying for 7–10 days until stems and capsules are fully dried.

Linseed plants can be harvested at different stages depending on market requirements. For greener decorative stems, harvesting may be done during the initial capsule formation stage. For a more mature appearance, plants can be harvested when the capsules are fully developed and have turned golden brown. The harvested plants are then bundled and dried under shade to preserve their natural shape, colour, and decorative value.

Processing

- Leaves may be removed or retained depending on market requirements.
- Handle stems carefully to prevent breakage.
- Proper drying preserves natural colour, shape, and shelf life of dried flower.

Market Opportunities

Dried linseed stems and capsules can be marketed through:

- Florists and flower shops
- Event decorators
- Handicraft producers
- Gift and home décor outlets
- Online and social media-based businesses

As consumer demand shifts towards natural and sustainable decorative products, dried linseed flowers offer a unique opportunity for diversification. The enterprise requires minimal investment, utilizes existing crops, and can create additional income streams from material that is often overlooked after seed production. By combining traditional linseed cultivation with innovative value addition, farmers can participate in the growing dried flower economy and transform a conventional oilseed crop into a high-value specialty product. By harvesting and drying the stems and capsules at the appropriate stage, farmers can produce attractive decorative materials for use in floral arrangements, handicrafts, home décor, and event decorations. With minimal investment, simple processing techniques, and growing demand for natural products, dried linseed flowers have the potential to become an additional source of income while expanding the utilization of the linseed crop beyond seed production.





Flowering stage



Drying upright



Dried flower arrangement