

Text Sorting

using the Numbers app

u3a iPads group 24 July 2026

1. Preliminaries

Need text to play with today: Invent a six-column, unordered table for garden plants. For today's purposes, and to save time just use 20 pretend plant names (or even human first names which may be shorter and easier to think of). Plant order does not matter but each plant needs the following info:

Name - (need not be real!)

Colour - white, red, yellow, blue

Season they flower - spring, summer, autumn

When purchased - this year, last year, a while ago.

Height - ground level, short, medium, tall

Lifespan - annual, biennial, perennial.

2. Sorting an entire table

There are three steps to **Sorting**.

- Tap the **letter at the top of the column** to be used for sorting.
- Tap the **green flash button** at bottom of screen.
- Tap **Sort Ascending** or your own choice.

For practice, use the 3 steps and sort by: • flowering season • colour • height.

3. Sorting just part of a table

Why? Perhaps because you have already sorted on flowering season but now within Spring you want to sort on height:

- To select** the rows to sort, tap the **row number** at the far left of the top row to be selected.
- Extend** the selection downwards by **dragging the centre** of the highlighted frame so that it covers all the rows to be sorted.
- Tap the icon of **3 horizontal lines** at top of screen. Tap the **Sort** tab and tap **Selected Rows**.
- Tap the letter** at the top of the column you want to sort by.

4. Manually re-sequencing columns and rows

Moving a column: tap the **letter above the column**, lift finger then **drag column letter** to where you want the column.

Moving a row: tap the **number at the left** of the row, lift finger then **drag row number** to where you want the row.

Using Sheets. For convenience it can be a good idea to copy a table onto several sheets (tap **Sheet 1** at top left and select **Duplicate**). Then sort different sheets in different ways. **Rename** the sheets by double tapping the present name and typing a new one.

5. Using the data

By Sorting on the table, answer the following questions. There are sorting suggestions in italics, but do it however you want to. Feel free to make up your own questions.

1. When will my X flower? (*Sort on plant names.*)
2. Do I have any blue spring flowers? (*Sort on flowering season then on colour.*)
3. Which is the mid-height, red flower I want to take seeds from? (*Sort on height or colour.*)
4. Have I any tall, perennial, yellow plants? (*Choose which feature to sort on.*)
5. Which is my oldest plant?

6. Potential

For which everyday topics would it be useful to be able to sort and re-sort items?

e.g. combined birthday and Christmas card lists; health issues and visits, etc.

The next u3a iPads meeting is at 2pm on Friday **28th August** 2026.