

# How to grow your own fruit and veg



Growing your own fruit and veg is a great way to be healthy and meet new friends. It can also help to save money and the environment!

So if you've never grown your own before and you'd like to give it a go, where do you start? A good place would be this guide, which provides some useful hints and tips on growing your own.

- 1 Start simple** – Choose a couple of fruit or veg to grow and focus on these. Salad leaves and herbs are quite easy and you can pick them throughout the summer.
- 2 Preparation is key** – Successful growing is all about successful preparation. What you put into the soil will directly affect what you get back.
- 3 Give me space!** – Plants when mature should reach just short of touching each other to make sure they get enough light and water.
- 4 I'm thirsty** – Particularly in the first 2-3 weeks after planting you need to regularly water your fruit and veg (daily if it's hot).
- 5 Enjoy** – Growing fruit and veg should be fun. If you're realistic about what you grow you're more likely to succeed. And success will give you confidence to sustain your interest.

Growing fruit and veg does need some dedication. Chucking a few seeds in some soil and expecting to feed you and your family over the winter just isn't going to happen. That being said, you don't need an allotment the size of a football pitch or to spend 8 hours a day of back breaking labour in order to supplement your diet with some delicious fresh produce. And if you've grown it yourself it generally tastes better.

Start by deciding where and what you want to grow. Tomatoes grow well in containers against a south-facing wall. Asparagus, runner beans and spinach are all also ideal for growing in containers. Just place them on a balcony or windowsill where they will get some sun.

Get the soil conditions correct and carrots are one of the easiest vegetables to grow. Sow from April through to July. Use a trowel to dig out narrow rows (drills) 2cm deep and 12cm apart. The easiest way to sow is to empty some seed from the packet into the palm of your hand and take small pinches of seed, dropping a couple of seeds every 2.5cm. Cover the seeds with fine soil very gently firming it down. Water with a fine spray if dry. The seedlings should start to appear 15 to 20 days later. When the foliage begins to wilt and shrivel up, the carrots have reached maturity and are ready to be picked.

There are as many tips and tricks to growing your own as there are types of fruit and veg. This introduction has just touched on the basics, but if you follow these key points, you'll be dishing up your own in no time. If you want to know more about buying and storing seeds, preparing your ground, caring for your crops or dealing with potential pests, then visit our website.

[www.neighbourhoodsgreen.org.uk](http://www.neighbourhoodsgreen.org.uk)