

Have you ever thought about growing your own food?

Whether you're hoping to have your own allotment, a food garden in your backyard or simply want to try growing microgreens (eg. herbs or pea shoots) on your windowsill in your apartment, there are lots of benefits of growing your own food:

- 🌿 You will have fresher tasting and more nutritious food
- 🌿 It helps contribute towards tackling the climate emergency
- 🌿 Growing your own food can save money on your shopping bill
- 🌿 It can improve your physical and mental health
- 🌿 It helps to reduce food waste

Top Tips for beginners:

You don't need a big garden to get started growing fruit and vegetables, even if you live in a flat or apartment, you can still get involved!

Start with something easy that grows quickly like salad leaves or leafy greens.



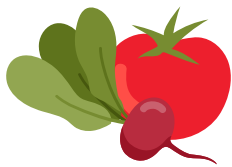
Food can be grown:

- On patios
- In raised beds
- In greenhouses
- On balconies
- In flower beds
- On windowsills

As long as you have sunlight, something to hold the soil, and access to water, you can grow your own food.

Read on to find out how you can get started!

Start with something you love



Take a look at this list of easy to grow vegetables and ask yourself - what would I like to eat the most?

- Tomatoes
- Salad leaves
- Chillies
- Cabbage
- Swiss chard
- Beetroot
- Courgette
- Kale
- Potatoes

Anything can be a planter

You don't need to spend money on fancy pots and planters, plenty of household items can be recycled into a container, you could use a cleaned out old mop bucket! Just remember to add in some drainage holes, this will help stop your plants from drowning or developing rot.



Keep your soil nice and loose

If you're using a planter (eg a plant pot) make sure you keep your soil nice and loose for planting, your plants will be doing a lot of growing, so make sure they can move about easily.



All plants need water, just like us



Make sure you keep your crops watered, especially if outside in dry weather and after planting/sowing.

Growing herbs

(eg basil, mint, spinach or cress)

Herbs grow best with full sun and well-drained soil.

Sow seeds every fortnight throughout spring and summer

Sow seeds for basil, chives and parsley under glass with or without heat from January to early April.

Pot outdoor herbs like chives, mint, parsley, or tarragon and bring them in for the winter, standing them on a windowsill with plenty of light.



Where to start?

Step 1

Decide where you're going to start your growing. Anywhere will do, as long as it is not in too much shade, your plants will need light to grow. You can also use pots on well-lit windowsills or on balconies.

Step 2

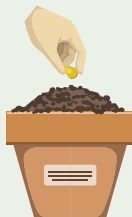
Once you've chosen the spot, it's time to get the soil ready.

If you're using pots or containers, they need to have holes in the bottom for drainage. Start to fill them just over halfway with soil, breaking up any lumps you might find.

If you're using soil from outside, break up the soil with a fork.

Step 3

Now you're ready to start planting. Choose a selection of fruit and vegetables that you enjoy eating. Follow the instructions on the pack to start planting.



Step 4

You can boost your growing by feeding your plants a fruit and vegetable plant food. This is available in garden centres, supermarkets and online shops.

In no time at all, you'll be harvesting your own tasty home-grown fruit and vegetables!



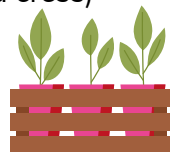
What if I'm short of space?

There are various easy to grow fruit and vegetables that don't take up much space and can easily be grown on patios and balconies including:

- Strawberries
- Onions
- Beans
- Peppers
- Lettuce
- Carrots

What about a window box in the house?

- Herbs (especially coriander, basil, mint and cress)
- Lettuce
- Chillies
- Spinach



Let's Get Growing!

Expect triumph but also the odd disappointment

Sometimes you'll end up with more food than you expected, but there might be times you don't (eg with bad weather). The joy from tucking into your own food outweighs any disappointment.

Guides and Tips:

Did you know, different types of fruits, vegetables and microgreens can be planted and grown throughout the year in the UK.

Click the links below for handy online guides that will tell you the best time to plant your crops:

(These planners are based on planting/growing times for the South of England which may be a month ahead of Bradford. Watch out for frost).

