



garden for food

growing that is simple, fun and wildlife friendly

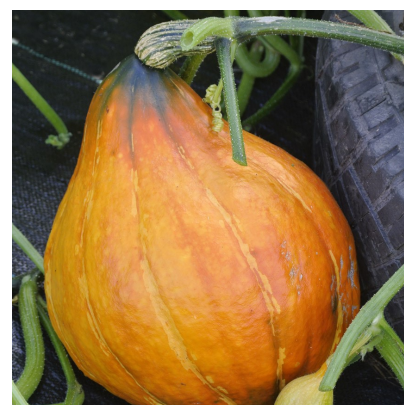
Growing your own looks set to stay; it's fun, cheap and better for us all and the environment. Fruit and vegetables can be grown in a number of different settings - a patio, windowsill, back gardens, allotment or community gardens and, whilst it is hard to be self-sufficient in our fruit and vegetable consumption, we can all do our bit. Read below for a few key pointers for green-fingered success.

Keep it simple

- Choose the sunniest spot you can find.
- Pick just five crops to get started.
- Sow in straight lines according to the seed packet and label and date each sowing.
- Be careful not to sow too deep (no more than twice the depth of the seed itself).
- Grow the things that you love to eat or cook regularly, and which might be expensive to buy - fresh herbs, spinach, soft fruit.
- Children love food that can be picked raw and eaten straight from the plant - strawberries, carrots, peas, apples.
- Grow crops that give you a multiple harvest such as raspberries, courgettes, purple sprouting broccoli, spinach, cut and come again salads.
- As your confidence grows try to expand the number of things you grow or try different varieties. Extend your growing season using cloches or try starting things off on a sunny windowsill to start things growing earlier.
- Stagger your crops by sowing small amounts regularly, this should avoid you having too much of any one crop.
- Where space is limited, a selection of herbs is your best bet and they are great for wildlife.
- If you are growing indoors, try sprouting seeds and pulses too.



garden for life



Garden with nature

Gardening organically without the use of artificial fertilisers or pesticides is the easiest and safest way to grow food and it's better for the environment.

Key to gardening organically is building soil fertility - try composting on site where possible, using green manure crops in the winter and early spring to build fertility and prevent nutrient loss through winter rainfall.

When sowing seedlings indoors use a peat-free compost.

Get to grips with a few key pests and diseases and how best to avoid them without resorting to chemicals or a shot gun!

Practice companion planting by planting herbs and flowers with your vegetables to encourage pollinators and predators of the suckers that you don't want.

We'd recommend every plot irrespective of size grows Calendula, Limnanthes (the poached egg plant) and Borage. They self-seed freely and will provide colour and nectar throughout the season. Try to buy organic seeds.

Reduce your workload

Get to know your weeds early on and how to manage them. Remove the flowering ones e.g. willow herb, chickweed, dandelions before they produce seed, and the creeping ones: couch grass, buttercup, thistle by digging or mulching. You will save a lot of time and energy! If you are unsure if it's a weed or a seedling, remember - weeds DON'T grow in straight lines.

Create a social space

Enjoy the fruits of your labour with neighbours, family and friends - and the wider community if your growing space is a community garden. Having a bench, picnic table or undercover space is a great way to bring people together to share food. You can also cook outside using a stove, fire pit or barbecue.

Where next

General advice on how to grow food and composting:

Garden Organic www.gardenorganic.org.uk/growing-advice

RHS www.rhs.org.uk/advice

Scottish Allotments and Garden Society www.sags.org.uk

Grow Your Own Scotland: www.growyourownsotland.info/

Ideas to bring people together

Cooking outdoors:

www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/cooking-and-feasting-plot-scotland

The Big Lunch:

www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage

If you would like to get involved with a community garden:

www.farmgardenscotland.org.uk

Photos: Taybank Growers Cooperative

