



The Super Simple Guide to Growing Your Own Vegetables, Fruit & Herbs

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This guide is dedicated to my wonderful blog readers, who are always really supportive, giving feedback to my posts and constant encouragement to my ideas. Thank you.



Introduction

Welcome to the Forget-me-Not Cultivation Blog's Super Simple Guide to growing your own fruit and veg.

This guide has been written with the complete novice in mind. The one that has always wanted to have a go at growing a vegetable or fruit but just doesn't know where to start, nor what to do.

A bit about me

I've been growing vegetables, fruit and herbs for about 30 years (I started very young!). Ever since helping my mum with sowing runner beans in the garden and pepper plants on the window sill. When that wasn't enough I'd go and help my next door neighbour cut his grass and dig over his veg beds. I didn't come from a horde of fanatical gardeners in my family and social circles but nevertheless being outdoors, tinkering with plants was always just there as absolute, without ever making anything of it. Yet in some sense all those little exposures I had to plants got very firmly wedged in my very being. I didn't want to be anywhere else. It became a steadfast passion, one that has stayed with me ever since.

When I left home I had a short hiatus of growing anything but it wasn't long before my fingers were itching to get into growing something again, but what? When faced with so much information about what is right to grow, easy to grow, when to grow and how to grow it all gets overwhelming. So I decided to start small. Herb pots on a windowsill which then expanded to herb pots on the patio, which then turned into pots of carrots, bags of potatoes, which then turned into a patch for growing beans and then finally I established a growing bed 3m x 1.5m to build on my growing knowledge. Since then it's kept growing and now we have 6 raised beds and more than 100 square meters of space around the garden dedicated to growing herbs, fruit and veggies.

100 square meters is nothing in comparison to the available space given on an allotment nor is this even the required amount to be able to feed a family of four at home but then again



that idea was written in 1974 and we now understand that growing doesn't have to ever be linear. It can be vertical, square and compact.

Having a small space no longer restricts anyone from growing something and even if that is one small herb it should never be underestimated that by growing that herb you've just made a real difference. A difference to your outlook (literally), your relationships with food and more importantly your connection to the very earth you stand on.



About this Guide

This guide is free from copyright. I give all copyright up. You are free to use and distribute the content of this guide as and how you wish, and of course if you could credit me somewhere in there then I'd very much appreciate it.

A few assumptions about you

Like all good guides I've made some assumptions on where you currently are in terms of cultivating:

1. You like spending time in your garden, on your balcony or over on your allotment
2. You enjoy eating vegetables and fruit
3. You haven't got a lot of time to spend on cultivating and keeping pests at bay
4. You own a spade or a hand trowel but never use it for anything other than digging out the odd weed, or plant.
5. You have little patience with plants but are willing to learn that skill because you're going to need it more than any book, or guide can ever help you with. (Don't worry - this guide will give you support in that area)



Super Simple Starts Here

I said this would be a really super simple guide. So here it is. Here is one that details the same general process you need to go through every time you sow and plant seeds.

1. Choose your site (think of space you have, sun, ease of access etc)
2. Prepare your site by digging, removing weeds, large stones, and enrich the soil by feeding it ready for the plants that will be grown there.
3. Do a general measurement of space between each plant (use your hand span as a guide), and mark out with nearby stones
4. Plant seeds, depth of seed width x2, or dig hole and place the plant in hole.
5. Water the site well before sowing seeds or water the site well after planting seedlings and plants.
6. Keep site weed free
7. Feed plants once flowering
8. Harvest when ready!

That's about as simple as it gets but of course I'd be doing myself and you an injustice if I just left my guide there.

Instead lets go on a trip together. One where I help you and guide you on how to sow and cultivate using a selection of veggies, fruits and herbs that I've personally grown (so know all the treasures and pitfalls of growing them), and will hopefully give you just enough information and encouragement to make you want to go off and grow your own.



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Ten Life Affirming Reasons that Growing Your Own is the Way to Go!

A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust. - Gertrude Jekyll

You've seen the programs on TV, ones that show time after time just how easy it is to grow your own. Look - he's doing it, or they are doing it, or it looks all so quaint and effortless to accomplish.

Sat down in front of your TV set watching these colourful scenes of huge bounty have given you a nice warm fuzzy feeling and as soon as the weekend comes you're going to get out into your garden and recreate that herb knott or dig up the lawn as shown in archive footage during the war just so you can grow some spuds because it would be great to do that...right?

Then the weekend comes and you realise that your husband/wife/dog would kill you if you got rid of that nice lawn, and that herb knott is going to take ages to grow, and if you're not mistaken it's going to rain so you'll just sit back down if you don't mind and and turn the TV back on.

So lets get this out of the way now - what you see on TV, in any capacity is not what you're going to get in real life. Those bright, exuberant, enthusiastic growers on TV can't be the reason you're going to get growing your own. They should of course entertain you and give you ideas - but your garden and the reasons for growing crops are going to be even better and should enthuse you longer than any program lasts.

So what should those reasons be?



Proper good reasons for growing your own crops:

1. **Your health.** By pottering about and growing vegetables you're not only getting fresh air and exercise but you'll be growing crops by your very own hand. That means they will be the freshest, tastiest and most nutritious crops you'll ever eat. As vegetables are proven to not only [keep you in tip-top condition](#) but prevent many life threatening conditions such as high blood pressure, cancer and cardiovascular disease then you're onto a win-win already.
2. **Save Money.** While you may have to spend out initially for compost, pots and seeds the [money you eventually save](#) will far outweigh, in a relatively short period of time. Fruit especially can save you big bucks. Even a bag of salad leaves can be paid back in just two sowings from one seed packet that costs half the price of the salad leaves already picked. Crops can be stored in many cases ensuring even more savings for you and your family.
3. **Learn new skills, including patience.** It won't take long to appreciate sowing, planting, reading the weather for rain, knowing which pots to sow with what seeds, which compost to start your seeds in, how much water to use (and how to collect it), and how to deal with pesky pests. Before long, from all that experience and exposure to growing crops, you'll become your very own expert because no one growing experience is the same, your growing space will be unique to your location. You'll also learn the much under used skill of patience. However much you'll want to rush your plants to flower, or however much you get frustrated by the weather in the end you'll understand that being patient is not only very calming but works best because you can't beat nature.
4. **Sharing is caring.** With growing crops comes much excitement which you'll want to shout out about to friends and family. Showing them all the tomatoes on your vines makes you smile - a lot. You'll find yourself sharing your crops as if it's actual gold you're given to people (which it is to you). You might even begin sharing and swapping seeds and making new friends along the way.
5. **Helping to save the planet.** It sounds a huge challenge (or commitment) but actually the smallest of actions can, and do, make the biggest differences. Someone once showed me how good it was to grow crops, I'll share my knowledge with you and hopefully excite you into growing something, then you'll grow crops and show others.



By growing crops all of us are reducing food to be transported thousands of miles across the world. We're nourishing the soil that will nourish us with food and we're cutting down on [plastic packaging](#) which is making it's own contribution to global warming by the sheer volumes produced every week for fresh food items.

6. **Grow exactly what you love.** If you can't get enough of tomatoes then grow nothing else but tomatoes. Always running out of basil in your cooking? Then set aside space for a big patch of it. Eat strawberries until they come out of your ear? Then knock yourself out with a 100 plants. Grow only what you enjoy eating, that way you'll have a personal interest in the crop itself. Growing crops doesn't have to be about year round supply, it could be more important to get the biggest harvest from your favourite crop once a year. Make it your garden, unique to you.
7. **Teach your kids/grandkids exactly where their food comes from.** Catching kids early enough shows them that growing food is just a normal and natural process, instead of the packets, bags, and trays that come from the supermarkets. You'd also be surprised just how much they'll want to help you out.
8. **Food will taste better.** If you've ever pulled a carrot out of the ground, washed it down and taken a bite from it you will know it tastes 200% nicer than one from a shop. Imagine that but for everything you grow. Sweet Corn, beetroot, peas, blueberries, strawberries, chillies, they will all have a lot more flavour because the naturally occurring sugars contained in fruit and veg won't have time to disappear before you eat them.
9. **Aids positive mental health.** With 1 in 5 people now experiencing mental health problems it's a wonder that gardening isn't made mandatory on prescription. That's because being outside, tending to plants, by hand, can be a real tonic for your soul. Having a real connection with the earth and watching life grow beneath your watchful eyes has [proven to reduce depression and anxiety](#). Growing crops can literally give you a whole new, and very positive, perspective on your life.
10. **Because it's not difficult to do.** I love learning new things, it's what makes us grow and develop as humans but I also know that if something is too difficult, tiresome or tedious to muster I'll soon lose interest. Gardening can be a skill, a job, a hobby or even a calling which means it can be as easy or as in-depth as you want it to be. Sowing a few seeds, and watering them once a week isn't hard and it certainly



doesn't have to be difficult. Some things in life are hard but growing fruit and veg isn't one of them.



Conquering the Reasons of Why People Don't/Can't/Won't Grow Their Own

Because you decided to download this eBook gardening demons do not hide in your closets, sheds or anywhere else for that matter. You're interested in growing your own veggies, and that's why you're here. However even taking on a new project, like growing your own food, can sometimes be a bit daunting and you may have one or two reservations.

I find that when I engage with non-growers as to why they don't currently sow any seeds, or dig any soil I'll invariably hear the following reasons:

1. No space
2. Space available is only concrete
3. Cheaper and easier to visit a supermarket
4. killing plants (too easily)
5. Time
6. Time
7. ...and time

Here are the answers that hopefully solve those issues:

- **Space** - everyone has some space. Space can be found everywhere, and indeed anywhere. Space doesn't have to be traditional. When people say they haven't got space to grow anything it could mean they are using space for something else (i.e flowers), or they don't realise how much growing potential there is in very little space. I mean I'm talking less than a meter, 50 cms even which can house a herb plant. Most houses have usually got some kind of patio area leading from a door, and I haven't seen a property yet that hasn't got a windowsill so space is definitely not a problem. It's just what to do with that space and finding the best possible use for it. A window box can provide you with salad leaves and herbs for about ten months of the year while a tall but



narrow pot could provide you with runner beans over summer.

- **Solution** - If you're not sure what space you have then just try it out with various growing containers, or different crops until you're happy. Planting doesn't have to be done linear as you'd see in an allotment or on farmers fields. More intense practices of planting such as [square foot gardening](#), [vertical spacing](#) and [Three sisters planting](#) enable much more to be grown in smaller spaces.
Make it your own by marking that space out with a mini fence or hedge. If it's that you're not sure what can be grown in the space you've identified, don't be afraid to try. If in doubt follow this idea - imagine how wide (not tall) the eventual cropping plant will get. Now give that plant a clear 15-20cm (or the size of your hand (wrist to tip of middle finger). How many plants do you think would now fit?
- **I only have a concreted area** - these are great areas for growing containers on, with the added bonus that you can replace the crops from season to season with different plants and flowers. Just because you only have concrete or gravel areas doesn't mean you can't grow anything. You can even grow fruit trees in pots.
- **Solution** - just start with one small container/pot - keep it in a corner so it doesn't look out of place and fill it with compost. One container could grow one type of vegetable or fruit such as potatoes, raspberries, carrots, tomatoes... the list goes on. You could even have a container next to a fence and grow hops along the fence if you fancied blocking your neighbours out and growing your own beer :-))The same ideas apply as above - give it a go and see what happens. The important thing is to make any space do what you want it to do and take this time to find out (unless you're already set on growing a particular type of vegetable or fruit in which case go for it!)
- **Supermarkets are easier and cheaper** - okay I won't get on my soap box about this because I totally understand why anyone would say this, after all they are *kinda* right. Supermarkets usually are easy to get too, but then again so is your garden. Supermarkets are also very cheap for some goods - fruit not being one



of them though which is why we have a sugar addicted society because chocolate is much cheaper than an apple. However aside from the cheap and easy reasons you also have to weigh up the health implications of your choices. Buying at a supermarket means you're very often buying goods bought in bulk that have been [various pesticides](#) chucked on them, and have [less nutrient](#) values because of every previous years worth of pesticides filtering into the ground.

- **Solution** - try it, just one pot of veggies in the garden and I guarantee you (100%) that your veg will not only taste better but you'll feel so much better for knowing how that veg has been grown. Plus what could be nicer stepping in from the garden with a handful of runner beans to add straight to a pan of boiling water or a handful of raspberries to add to your yogurt for breakfast, all ready to eat.
- **Killing Plants** - Yup, we all do it. Those caterpillars ravaged my cabbages, I've had swede seedlings killed because of slugs and I've even lost a few plants from forgetting to water them. It happens to all gardeners and growers but it shouldn't put you off growing anything. Growing your own veggies is all about experimentation, learning from mistakes and most importantly it should be fun. Not a 24/7 operation. Most of the time a plant will die just because we didn't realise it was poorly, or we couldn't prevent it being attacked quick enough. Plants will die but we just have to put in the best preventions so each crop can have the optimal chance.
- **Solution** - Gardening is like anything else, either it's a chore or a hobby. If it's a chore then it's harder to remember to do things like feed, water and so forth. The real challenge for me is to find out *your individual reason* to want to grow something. If you *want* to do it's much easier to remember the plants. [Here is one reason](#), [here is another](#)...and finally - [here's another](#).

Don't look at it as a massive allotment project, just look at doing the **one pot**. One pot per year means you only have to concentrate on that one pot. Put a trigger with it so that every time you go outside to put your rubbish in the bin you walk past the pot, which means you can see what it's doing and help it along accordingly. All plants have the same needs and issues pests, watering,



feeding and being overcome by weeds. If you can get a headstart on all of those by regular monitoring you're sure to get a fantastic crop.

- **Time** - This one fits nicely with the one above, time will be an issue when you're not *into* gardening which I understand. We're all living extremely busy lives these days. Working, cleaning, washing, looking after your children, looking after the pets, looking after grandparents, cooking, driving. It's never ending but the thing with gardening, and in particular crop growing is that with very little time you're going to get something very pleasant, very edible back.
- **Solution** - Again don't think of this as a massive time consuming project. You can spend as much or as little time gardening as you want. One pot of growing veggies is going to take about **10 minutes of (work?) per week**. The initial getting the pot, buying the compost and filling the pot, sowing the seeds and first water will take all in all (depending on how far you go for the pot, seeds and compost) about 1 hr. After that **10 minutes are needed every week** from you just to check the plants and water them. The crop will be doing all the hard work.

Hope that has helped alleviate some issues or even small fears you might have been having about growing crops. Growing just one pot of herbs, vegetables or fruit really can make a huge difference and could even change your life.



Sporadic Gardening - Hints & Tips

When it comes to growing crops, a variety of crops, your time spent on them will be sporadic. One minute you'll be busy sowing seeds, or checking plants intensely for aphids, the next you'll be just standing around watching and waiting, with nothing but the odd bit of watering to do.

With all this seemingly intermittent time required on your cultivation plot it doesn't take much time to get out of the habit, both in spending quality time around your plants and keeping that knowledge you've learnt retained.

Below are a few garden related hints and tips which are helpful to keep garden cultivators on track.

Growing tips

- **Make plans and lists** - if you haven't already got a plan for your garden/cultivation space then it's always a good idea to start one. It doesn't have to be fancy. Mine is rather a rough pencil and ruler jobby which tells me which crops are going to be going into which bed. You could also extend this to pots, planters, even grow bags. By having a plan it helps you remember what needs to be planted and when.
- **Planting calendar** - find a good calendar that is useful for you. It might just be a list, or a spreadsheet, or just your seed packets in order of sowing. Whatever works but just make sure you have a trigger for going to look at the calendar so you know what to sow next. I have tended to work from sheer guess work and luck in the past and while it usually works out okay it has meant I've often missed getting plants (strawberry runners for example) at the wrong time thus meaning I've had to change my plans, or spend more money



buying bigger plants to catch up.

- **Sometimes it's just better to buy the plants.** Growing doesn't start and end at sowing seeds. If you haven't the space or the time to grow plants from seeds consider buying either bare rooted plants or waiting until you can buy the plants in pots. Although my tip above says the plants are usually more expensive to buy this way it depends on how you consider the cost against your time. I'd much rather be growing something than nothing at all.
- **Weeding.** Once the frost season has passed this begins to take a fair bit of time in the garden. Conquer it well by just taking one section at a time (just 20 mins can make a big impact) and using the right tools (*a patio weeder is worth it's weight in gold*). Then once it's done help yourself for next time by covering large sections of bare soil (that won't be used, such as around new hedges or around perennials) in chipped bark, weed suppressant membrane, or cover it with a sprinkling of wild flowers and let nature do the rest. Weeds between concrete are the worst kind of weeds but before you reach for the spray bottle consider whether the weeds are a nuisance or whether you can just leave those dandelions for the bees to use? Just be sure to take the heads off the dandelions after flowering so the seed pods don't develop and spread everywhere.
- **Sometimes it doesn't work.** If you're constantly having problems with a certain crop, or plant (such as an apple tree) it may be time to move it. Don't be afraid to keep moving plants around your garden until you get the best from the plant (flowers and fruit etc).
- **Find a good resource for solutions.** Not every book, website, nor forum will be able to answer your every question and I can guarantee you will come up with the best questions while no-one is around, and you're up to your wrists in compost. So be sure to find a reliable resource, that is easy to access and that will at least point you in the right direction for your answer or as close to one. That could be a old book, a person, or indeed a friendly local growing group.



There is of course me. [Drop me a line/tweet me](#) and I'll do my upmost to help you.



Lets Get Down to the Business of Growing

Without further ado you'll find below the **super easy guide to growing eleven different vegetables, herbs and fruits** that are tasty, don't take up much space and super easy to grow.

When you've got only a small patch of ground to cultivate crops it is vital to grow something that is worthy of the space it's taking up. My own personal cultivation rules (*which are still very much in development*), go something like this:

Doesn't matter if it's easy to grow or not but it must adhere to at least most, if not all of the following:

- Be of better quality than shop bought, or growing it must cost less than shop bought
- Yields well in smaller spaces
- Be of good nutritional value
- To only grow crops I absolutely adore eating. Not just 'kind of' like or 'like the look of.'
- Has a long harvest or long storage ability
- Can be grown without any use of pesticides (*goes without saying really*), so needs to fit into the general ongoing permaculture of the garden, including feeding and watering of the crops to avoid as many pest/disease issues possible.
- Where possible is native to the area, or the country. Much harder to do but not impossible over a longer period of time (for sourcing the seeds/plants).

All the crops listed have been grown by me, so I can **write with confidence** that if you give these guys a chance to grow in your cultivation space you will not be disappointed.



How this guide is set out:

All crops are set out in the same way - background to the crop, why you should grow it, how to grow it, pests and diseases to be looking out for, and finally what to do with the crop once it's ready.

***Note** - I've not listed varieties of each crop, unless it's one I've particularly grown, because there are just so many these days. It's always better to either grow a variety based on recommendation or, even better, just try them out yourself.*



Crops to Grow in your cultivation Space

Below you'll find a detailed but simple guide to growing **11 different crops**. Each being easy to grow, look after and extremely tasty to eat!

I've grown all the crops listed in raised beds and/or containers so I can assure you each crop is perfect for the smaller sized garden/cultivation patch.

Let's get stuck in!



Beetroot

Beetroot has been around since the 5th Century. It originally evolved from Sea Beet which is a native plant up and down the coastlines of Britain. Originally having been cultivated in areas of the Middle East and parts of the Mediterranean it was very often the leaves rather than the beet that was eaten. It wasn't until Victorian times that the vegetable was used in British cooking bringing colour and variety to the table.

Why grow Beetroot?

Beetroot has equal lovers and haters due to its acquired taste. It's a very sweet vegetable that is mostly served cold in salad. However while it can be chopped, it can also be turned into liquid juice, and while most will consume the root the leaves also make delicious salad leaves or as a substitute for spinach, making this a very versatile little vegetable.

The health benefits of beetroot are tremendous. Not only do athletes drink beetroot juice to sustain energy levels and boost metabolism, but it's good for the rest of us too.

Research conducted on eating or drinking beet reduces cholesterol, stabilizes sugar levels and helps keep osteoarthritis at bay. It really is a powerful vegetable to have as part of your everyday diet.

Beetroot is very simple to grow and you don't need loads of room to get a decent crop. Beets can also be grown in pots which makes it the ideal crop to grow in small spaces.

How to grow Beetroot?

Seed sowing time: Mid-March - July (Outdoors)

Thinning out: When plants are 3cm tall

Second thinning: (if necessary): When rootballs are forming

Harvest: June - September



Position: South facing or semi shade.

Plants per square foot (30cm x 30cm): 9 (or 12 if you want smaller beets)

Plants per container: A deep pot is required (at least 30cm deep). A 38cm/3 litre pot will be wide enough. This will grow between 4-6 plants

Harvesting time: August-October

Beetroot can be grown either by seed or by buying a set of ready germinated plants from your local garden centre. I've grown beetroot for about six years now and only ever grown it from seed.

Seed is dirt cheap (excuse the pun) - you can get a packet of 200 seeds for as little as 69p. The easiest variety to grow will be *Boltardy* but there are at least five other ones, including roots that grow yellow, if you fancy something unusual.

- Prepare the ground ready for sowing ensuring extra nutrients have been added such as manure or compost, two weeks before sowing. Then you can add further fertilizer to continue to feed the growing area. Beetroot can be grown in clay based soils but be sure to fork it well before sowing.
- Sowing seeds can be done in drills, circles - any shape you prefer. Depending on the space available. Create the space and then sow the seeds, covering lightly with soil.
- Once the seedlings appear (after about 10 days), start to thin the plants out leaving a space of about 10cm's between plants.
- Keep the plants watered during dry spells.
- No further work necessary (unless you see weeds in which case hand pluck them out from around the beets. Using a hoe may well break unseen beet roots and cause bleeding to the plants.)
- 8-10 weeks later the beets will be ready for harvesting
- Expand the growing season by sowing little and often.



Important bit:

- Beetroot seed can be difficult to germinate so always buy fresh seed (or collect from previous years plants) and soak them in water for 30 minutes before sowing them. This helps speed the germination up.
- Don't grow beetroot before mid Spring time outdoors as the seedlings will likely die in either late frost or cold nights. Instead you could either start them off indoors or cloche the area sown to get them started earlier.
- If too much watering takes place the beets will grow loads of leafy green tops at the expense of the root. If that starts to happen lay off the watering until the soil becomes dry. Unless you want lots of leafy growth to eat in which case - water on!

Pests and Diseases

No real pests or diseases which affect beets which is why they are such a firm favourite to grow every year.

Down the line

Beetroot can be left in the ground until you want to eat them which is another good reason for sowing little and often so you've always got the best fresh, and smaller, beets to choose from.

I left some beetroot all summer and into Autumn last year and they still tasted great at the end of October. They are better left in the ground than pulling up and putting in the fridge where they will quickly decline in both taste and flavour.

If you want to reclaim your growing space then pickling is what beets were really made for.

- Pull the beets from the ground and cut off the leaves to within 3 cms of the globe
- Cook the beets until tender
- Remove the beet skins



- Sterilize some jam jars.
- Create your own pickling vinegar mix in a saucepan and bring to boil. Then let it cool.
- Add beetroot and pickling mix to jar. Leave for a couple of weeks then eat!



Blackcurrants

Blackcurrants, as fruit goes, black currants don't get much of a look-in when it comes to deciding what to grow in your plot. Very often it can be overlooked by more fashionable fruit types such as strawberries or cherries.

So, I'm here to try and sway you to think about planting a blackcurrant bush because they really are quite fabulous little currants and are probably one of the all time easiest fruits to grow.

Like most people I was a bit dubious about buying and planting a blackcurrant plant at first. It was nothing more than a stick bought from a saver shop and as far as I knew I'd never really eaten blackcurrants but I decided one day to just go for it. The stick was cheap and if I lost it then it wouldn't matter - I'd tried and would then move on. Fortunately the stick had other ideas and I'm really pleased to now have it in my garden.

Why grow Blackcurrants?

Apart from being extremely easy to grow (in Europe - North America has experienced a few disease issues so I hear with theirs), blackcurrants are [bursting with vitamin C](#). In fact just 50g of berries will give you 100% of your daily allowance. It's also got high levels of Vitamin E an antioxidant which is essential for increasing your well being and looking after your skin.

Blackcurrants are also great in the kitchen. While not the first choice for eating fresh off the bush because of their slightly bitter taste, they are great in all things drink and cake related. The berries can be turned into jams, juices, alcohol, and preserves. The currants can be blended, mixed and added to anything from yogurt to mincemeat making it extremely useful.



Finally, for the size blackcurrant bushes can produce high yields. A harvest of 3-5kg can be gained from a mature plant in one summer.

How to grow Blackcurrants?

Bare root plant buying time: October to February

Pot plant buying time: All year round

Position: Full sun or semi shade.

Plants per square foot (30cm x 30cm): 1 plant. Due to it's eventual size be mindful where you put the plant so it doesn't cast shadow on smaller crops over the summer.

Plants per container: A deep pot is required (at least 60cm) and wide (at least 38cm/3 litre). This is enough space for one plant.

Harvesting time: June-August (second year onwards)

Okay are you ready for this because you need to read this carefully - it's very detailed...

- Buy a plant - I've seen them as low as £1.99 in some shops. They can be bought and planted either in bare rooted form from Oct-Mar or in a pot (all year round).
- Dig a hole and add plant to ground or place in a pot (at least 60cm diameter)
- Add mulch to the soil to reduce weeds
- Water and leave. Water again during dry spells.

Seriously *that's* how hard it is growing them!

At the end of May you'll start to see flowers appearing up the stems and from mid-summer onward bunches of deep coloured currants will start to form in clusters.

They don't take up a lot of space, which makes them ideal for smaller gardens and patio areas. One plant can produce enough currants for a whole family.



Important bit:

- Cheap plants are okay to buy as long as the stock is certified to be disease resistant so make sure you just take a few seconds to read the label before buying.

Pests and Diseases

Blackcurrants have a nasty habit of being able to attract something called American gooseberry mildew. It leaves grey powder and white fungus along the stems and leaves causing the bush to not only have trouble growing but also from forming any fruit. Best remedy is to either cut out all the stems with the nasty fungus or ditch the plant altogether (in garden bin, not composter).

In terms of pests you've got two that need keeping an eye out for:

- **Mites** that infest new growth in Spring. In this case strip out the infested areas if it isn't too bad. If it's gone too far then consider ditching the plant after you've harvested.
- **Birds**. Once the local birds know your growing blackcurrants you'll be the talk of the bird community and your currants will soon disappear. While this is no great shakes (after all you could just grow the blackcurrants for the birds as a food source), it's heartbreaking to see your hard work being eaten by feathered friends. So just cover the plants as they start to fruit with netting.

Don't let the potential pests nor diseases put you off - they are pretty rare with the cultivated varieties. I've been growing blackcurrants for about three years now and not had any problems (*I've probably also just jinxed myself now*).



Down the line

- No pruning of the plant is required until the fourth year when you want to prune down all old wood to the base of the plant to encourage new shoots which will then encourage more flowers and more fruit. This needs to be done when the plant is dormant during the winter months.
- Leave the currants on the plant until they are ripe and juicy. If you can't use them straight away then freezing is the best way to store them until you need them in the kitchen.



Blueberries

This has got to be my favourite fruit to eat (apart from raspberries, strawberries...). I took to them about four yrs ago when I read about them in a magazine and thought I should try them. I realised quite quickly how versatile these little berries could be. You could use them in a variety of recipes, as part of smoothies or simply to eat as a snack. Compared to most other fruit the sugar in them is low so they make a great sweet substitute.

There is however one problem I found with buying them. They didn't last all year. Supermarkets will pretty much try and sell the blueberries year round but taste pretty disgusting from about Jan to April and have been shipped halfway around the world at that point to be sold at ridiculous prices.

Why Grow Blueberries

Firstly - they are VERY easy to grow

Secondly I call blueberries - super foods. A coined term used mostly to make people buy things they don't need but on this occasion I really believe blueberries are. They contain healthy properties designed to boost your immune system and keep you fighting fit.

The blueberry is a native to North America.

How to grow Blueberries

Bare root plant buying time: November to March

Pot plant buying time: All year round

Position: Semi shade. (Avoid full sun spots)

Plants per square foot (30cm x 30cm): 1 plant. Due to it's eventual size be mindful where you put the plant so it doesn't cast shadow on smaller crops over the summer.



Plants per container: A deep pot is required (at least 60cm) and wide (at least 38cm/3 litre). This is enough space for one plant.

Harvesting time: May-September (second year onwards)

Blueberries are great for growing in pots. You can either grow individual varieties in separate pots/containers or get a bigger pot and plant two different varieties in.

- Get a pot
- Buy a blueberry plant (or two). Yes they are expensive. Plants average about £7.99 from garden centres. Well known supermarkets have been known to sell their plants at £3.99 but you have to get in quick (around beginning of May) for those.

It will be worth it I promise! You'll get the £7.99 back easily within your second yr - possibly even your first depending on the variety chosen and the weather! With the right pruning in later years that blueberry plant you bought could last you up to 50yrs.

- Fill your pot with ericaceous compost, bought from any garden centre, not just general compost. Blueberries need a acidic soil which is why they are better in pots, for managing the acidic levels.
- Plant your blueberry in the soil, making sure it is well watered in.
- Place the plant in a semi-sunny position
- Keep the plant well watered, especially in dry seasons. Don't let the compost dry out. The roots always need to be wet.
- Sit back and watch the fruit begin to appear from May to September (depending on variety).
- Future years, in Spring, mulch the pots with further compost or pine needles.



Important Part

Blueberries are acid loving plants so be sure to keep the acid levels up in the soil by adding ericaceous compost every year, or like me, just add ground coffee beans to the existing soil when you have it available.

Any new plants bought don't need any pruning done to them until you've had them planted for at least 3 yrs.

On that 3rd winter prune out any dead, dying or diseased branches (not that there should be any in yr3), [prune two or three canes down to the ground to make way for new stems to appear.](#)

Blueberries will fruit on previous years growth which means any new growth created this year won't actually create fruit until next yr.

So, If you cut that down, no fruit will appear, however if you don't cut anything back no new growth will happen which will turn your plant too woody for producing any fruit.

Just get to know your plants and prune only the necessary areas. Or if in in doubt - ask.

Pests and Diseases

Blueberries are pretty disease resistant. You have to keep an eye out for late frosts when the young branch tips are developing which may need protecting but apart from that the biggest other problem will be:-

- **Birds!** Birds love the fruit. They will be quite happy to fly from far away to take a feast on the berries and before you know it the whole lot have been devoured. Just put some netting over the fruit to stop the birds getting to it from May onwards.



Down the line

Blueberries can be stored for use later through freezing. Although the season is short you can extend it by buying different varieties which flower and fruit at different times. Otherwise just sit back and watch how the foliage turns a beautiful red colour in the autumn, it's quite spectacular.



Garlic

Garlic is usually planted in Autumn (Sept to Dec in the UK), or Spring (March to May). Which means you've got two chances to get a good crop going, something not many veggies do making garlic exceptionally versatile, especially for busy folk who may miss the first planting window.

Why grow garlic?

Garlic is very beneficial to our diet. Eating it regularly can help to fight cancer, heart disease, diabetes, lowering cholesterol and stave off infections because it's just packed full of vitamins, including vitamin C and B6, and other positive nutritional elements.

As well as that it makes food taste great and enhances flavour naturally.

Growing garlic can also be very cost effective for your purse.

A garlic bulb (from a supermarket) currently costs anywhere between 30p to £1.50 depending on time of year, where it has come from and whether it's organic or not. 30p is pretty cheap right? I bought a set of three garlic bulbs from a local garden centre for £2.99, from that 33 cloves have now been planted. Now I'm not expecting all 33 to grow but if they did - $33/2.99$ makes each clove 0.09p (or 99 per whole bulb). That's roughly 332% cheaper than the cheapest garlic bought at the garden centre. Or to put it another way, it would take over 3 of my homegrown garlic sets to make one supermarket 30p garlic. Even by adding in compost, extra watering and fertilizer one bulb is never going to cost me 30p to grow. So it's a win win already.

Garlic could be classed as a two crop veg because you'll also get the garlic tops (scapes) to use in cooking as well - meaning you get two for one on garlic growing, making it very suitable for smaller spaces.



Garlic is perfect for growing in pots, containers and raised beds.

If properly stored, garlic fully grown and picked will last...well so far my bulbs have lasted five months!

Identifying the history of our common garlic bulb is rather difficult because all garlic, called allium is cultivated from wild allium, and so it has no origin as such. Research has suggested the cultivation may have begun in central Asia (anywhere from Kazakhstan to Afghanistan) but as wild allium can be found on continents from Europe to America it's difficult to be conclusive.

It's been somewhat ridiculed as a culinary addition, some religions such as Hindu and Jainism have, in history, avoided using garlic at all costs as these religions believe eating it stimulates and increases bodily desires. Buddhists also refrain as they believe eating garlic would move the mind away from mindful meditation.

Garlic is also well known (throughout history) for keeping away vampires and other nasty spirits, a force against good and evil, so clearly it's a vegetable not to be trifled with!

It's also believed to be good for one other thing - keeping mosquitoes away. Now, there is no evidence to prove this but unless I was just exceptionally lucky last summer, I didn't get bitten by a mosquito once. I even tested the theory by sitting out in the garden, at dusk, just as the temperatures were cool enough to encourage the pesky insects. Nothing, not one bite. I did it again, and still nothing so you tell me - is it a natural repellent? I like to think so. You can also use crushed garlic, mixed with water, as a pest repellent for mice in the garden. Spray as required!

How to grow Garlic:

Plant out sets: October to March

Thinning out: Not required

Position: Sunny position/semi shade.

Plants per square foot (30cm x 30cm): 4-9 (depending on variety of garlic chosen)



Plants per container: The wider pot the better/three litres is ideal. 4 bulbs.

Harvesting time: June-July

Garlic can be grown from seed but this takes a long while so it's always far better to buy a pack of bulbs (sets) from a garden centre.

Get your soil ready for planting, ensuring the soil has been well forked over into a fine (as fine as possible) tilth. Garlic doesn't grow deep. It doesn't grow big roots so the soil needs to be fine enough to allow the garlic root system to grow without hitting any compact soil barriers.

- Separate each bulb into cloves and plant each clove just below soil level.
- Water and leave
- Hand weed around the plants. Using a hoe may cause injury to the plants if not careful.

Important Bit

Garlic likes well drained, well raked soil, and it prefers it on the dry side so don't over water the plants. Little and often is better, and only on hot days.

Don't bother planting garlic bulbs bought from supermarkets. They are usually treated (sprayed) to prevent sprouting. Instead buy a pack from the garden centre which usually come in around £2.99 for three bulbs.

Some of the cloves planted over winter may move as the soil heaves. Just push the cloves back in the soil.

Pests and Diseases

Over watered soil is the biggest concern as it will attract fungal disease. Two diseases in particular affect garlic as it's growing:

- **Onion/white rot** - which appears as white fungus on the bottom of the bulbs. First sign of problem is wilting green garlic tops. Not very common but it does happen



and once seen it means the plants need pulling up and destroying (do not add to composter, put in normal bin).

- **Downy mildew** - Much more common. It affects the growing leaves of the plants causing them to turn yellow and eventually wilt and die however the bulbs under the soil are not affected and can still be used but won't be as big when harvested.

Down the line

Once the leaves have begun to turn yellow and die down (naturally, rather than because of disease), it's time to harvest the crop. Using a fork carefully lift the bulbs from the soil. Store the garlic bulbs either by plating and hanging them up or adding them to a crate, and leave in a cool, dry place. They will keep for up to 12 months.

If you're happy with the flavour of the garlic grown, keep a few bulbs back for planting the following year.



Mint

Herbs don't get any easier than mint (peppermint), otherwise known as *mentha piperita* (one of the very few scientific plant names I could ever remember in my RHS training).

Once established a good plant can keep you in minty freshness for years.

Why grow Mint?

There are probably loads and loads of reasons to grow mint but there are at least four that I think make mint extra special:

1. You can eat it
2. You can drink it
3. It can encourage more wildlife into your garden
4. As an aromatherapy herb it's uses are wide and ranging from reducing stress to keeping ants and mice away from your home

And of course, having grown mint on and off for a few years I can confidently write that not only is it easy to grow but it's great in pots making it an ideal crop for balconies and smaller gardens.

Mint is actually a term for about 20+ species of plant. You can get anything from the traditional peppermint to apple mint, curly mint, spearmint...the list goes on and on which increases even more with modern cultivated hybrid varieties. All levels of the smell, the taste and even the flowers can be found, and each species will have it's own individual uses.

Mint is a native from the wilds of Europe, or specifically Greece, along with Asia and Africa. [Dried leaves have been found dating back to 1,000BC in Egypt](#) making it a pretty established plant.



How to grow Mint?

Planting time: March -September

Position: Semi shade/shade

Plants per square foot (30cm x 30cm): Due to it's rapid root growth I wouldn't advise adding it to a raised bed as it will quickly take over.

Plants per container: Any size pot - 1 plant

Harvesting time: May-October

Mint is a perennial which populates itself via a dense root system. You can buy mint seeds but as mint takes a while to establish itself ready for being able to use culinary wise then it's often a better idea to either buy a little herb plant from your local garden centre, or, get a root (or several) from an established plant (*trust me the owner will be pleased you asked as they sink under the weight of all their mint*).

You can plant pot mint any time during the year.

- Dig a hole big enough to accommodate the size of the plant ,
- Add some feed to the site before planting, such as bone meal
- Plonk the plant into the hole and firm soil around
- Water and leave
- If it starts flowering, cut the flowers off to maintain the foliage
- Water during hot weather only (eve/early morning)

The plant will start to die down over autumn and winter but don't worry it will come back with gusto the following spring.

Important bit:

- Before you go ahead and plant mint just be a little mindful of any other plants near by. Mint is quite happy to grow out and take all the space it can, including other plant space.
- If you want to grow it in the ground then the best way to keep the plant contained is to dig the whole plant up, in autumn, and trim the roots using a secateurs. Then replace the plant, ensuring it firmly back in the ground.



- Keep the roots you prune because you can use these to replace old plants.
- The same could be done with pot plants - every few years you may need to take the plant out of the pot and divide it, adding more nutrients to the soil and popping the now smaller plant back into it's home. That way it will put more effort into growing it's leaves than it's roots.
- Of course if you have the space, or indeed want the plant to grow up and out then leave it and it will soon make quite an impact on the space with it's beautiful green leaves (*or variegated depending on the variety*).

Pests and Diseases

- While mint will do well in most sites, it prefers semi-shade because if the plant gets too hot in the summer months mold and greenfly will start to set in.
- Mint rust can be identified via distorted stems and leaves in spring, along with yellowing spots found on the leaves. If effected dig up the plant, including all roots, and dump it (don't add to composter). The earlier it's caught the better.

Spores of the fungus develop in the soil so if you can either replace container compost or take out some of the soil in the ground, around the plant, to ensure the next plant won't suffer the same fate.

Down the line

A mint plant will last about four years before it needs to be replaced/divided because it tends to get straggly and loses it's vigor.

Replacing mint is actually a lot easier than just buying a new plant. If you kept those pruned roots and put them in a pot over winter, preferably in a sheltered position they will grow into new plants the following spring. It's that simple.

Mint can be stored by drying. Cut the leaves off and leave them out to dry on a sunny windowsill. Store in a glass jar.



Of course, if you're feeling very adventurous then you can make your own aromatherapy oil using the leaves. Although I haven't tried this myself it doesn't look too painful to do, and it also involves alcohol - bonus.



Parsley

This beautiful leafed herb is everywhere. It makes the perfect garnish to any dish and it has a lovely rich green colour to look at and smells beautiful when just picked fresh.

Why grow Parsley?

You mean the above wasn't enough reason? Okay okay. Well, although parsley isn't a native herb to the UK I am very pleased the Romans thought to bring it with them because it actually contains a lot of antioxidants, which means it's extremely good for you to eat. It's also proclaimed (not by me though) to boost your immune system and also has anti-inflammatory properties.

So next time you sprinkle the parsley on your food, it's more than just making your food look nice.

In terms of cost - jars of dried parsley are pretty expensive and if you use it every day it's not long before that cost starts to really add up. One packet of parsley seeds could last you a whole year, if not two.

Also because it doesn't get too big in size it means it can always be grown in the smallest of places.

How to grow parsley?

Seed sowing time: March -July (Outdoors)

Thinning out: Thin plants to about 10cm space between plants

Second thinning out: Thin again to about 22cm space between plants about four weeks later.

Position: Full sun/semi shade.

Plants per square foot (30cm x 30cm): 1 (or 2 plants until you decide which plant is doing better and then reduce to 1)

Plants per container: Any size pot that fits on a windowsill is big enough to house 1 plant

Harvesting time: June-October



You can either buy it as a small plant from a garden centre or you can grow it from seed:

- **Grow from seed.** Currently the cheapest seeds I have managed to find (at a certain well known discount shop) came in at 59p, and while most have between 500 to 1,000 seeds a packet - that 59p is going to last well!
- **Pot bought:** If you buy a small parsley plant from your local garden centre then it's just a case of potting into a container you're happy to see in your kitchen, or a pot close to your back door and away you go. Water when the soil becomes dry to touch, and leave to grow.

Growing from Seed specifics:

- Find a small pot, or seed tray. Add compost. Wet the compost thoroughly. Leave until all the water has drained through.
- Spread a few seeds onto the compost, don't overcrowd, just space out evenly to the area you've got.
- Gently add compost covering the seeds lightly.
- Leave to grow.
- Feed the plant some fertilizer (although not absolutely necessary), once a month once plant is established.

Important bit

Parsley seed needs constant high temperatures to germinate:

- Either add your pot to a heated propagator (if you have one). Or put a plastic cover over the pot. Those plastic sandwich bags are excellent for this purpose.
- Stand the pot on a windowsill in your sunniest room. Doesn't have to get sun all the time but the pot needs to catch the sun when it does come through.
- Be patient!

Germination can take upto 3 weeks. Yup, three long weeks of waiting.



Also, don't expect every seed sown to germinate. Of the 20 you may have sown - only 5 to 10 of those seeds will eventually germinate.

The warmer you can keep the pot, the higher the germination rates.

Good news

You only actually need one plant to germinate, to make a plant.

See, easy!

So now it's germinated

- Leave it in the pot until the second pair of leaves have grown. Then pot up the parsley into it's final pot and place it where you want to watch it grow, and will be able to use it.
- By now the plant is big and strong and can take any windowsill you choose to place it. It doesn't mind, honestly.

Ongoing care

Don't snip the entire head of parsley off in one go. Snip small and often, and snip from the outer stalks. That way the plant has a chance to recover and grow more leaves for you to use.

A plant indoors should last you one whole season (June to Oct). Once you see any seed heads growing then it's time to say good bye. You can of course use those seeds to grow further plants.

Water the plant (inside or out) when the soil feels dry to the touch.

You can add fertilizer if you want to which it would certainly appreciate but isn't compulsory. If you do decide to feed it then a standard tomato feed will work wonders.

Pests and Diseases

Parsley is pretty hardy plant so just look out for the usual suspects including aphids and possible caterpillar attacks in high summer.



Down the line

If the parsley is growing at a momentous speed at which you can't keep up a use for then you've got two options:

- Snip off a few stalks, cut them up (scissors are best), and freeze them (pop straight into a freezer bag and seal).
- June onwards snip off a few more stalks, and hang them up for drying in a cool, dry area, then store in a small airtight container. Drying takes a couple of months.

That way you'll always have parsley available to you to use in cooking and other uses (of which there are very many).

Allow some of the plant to flower and produce seeds to collect. That way you'll be ready for sowing again next year at no extra cost.



Radishes

If you ever eat salad, chances are it will usually contain slices of little red and white radish. They add an extra crunch to those salad leaves, make it look colourful and more importantly can sometimes (though doesn't always have to), add a taste of heat, through the peppery flavour.

There are many varieties of radishes that are grown around the world, but for this purpose I am primarily describing the European variety.

Why Grow Radishes?

Radishes are often overlooked when growing in the garden but they really shouldn't be. Eating just eight radishes is the equivalent of having half an orange. That's about 15% of your required vitamin C. Just from one source! Radishes also contain various other good minerals and vitamins like calcium and vitamin B.

They can be grown pretty much all year round, especially if you can keep them in a warm area during winter. Radishes also germinate very fast meaning they can be grown in between other crops (otherwise know as inter cropping/catch cropping), like leeks or cabbages, or just have a supply growing on your windowsill throughout the year.

They grow in most soil types and will even tolerate shady areas.

In fact you can't get a more accommodating healthy vegetable.

How to Grow Radishes

Seed sowing time: March -September (Outdoors)/February - March (Indoors)

Thinning out: Thin plants to about 5cm space between plants



Position: Full sun/semi shade.

Plants per square foot (30cm x 30cm): 16-20

Plants per container: A trough is ideal. About 15-25 plants depending on size

Harvesting time: 4-6 weeks later March to November.

Radishes can only really be grown from seed.

Packets of seed can be bought in the price range of anything between 29p and £2.99 depending on the variety you choose. Some are long and less red in colour, while others are more of a globe shape and tend to be a darker shade of red. Doesn't matter what variety you choose as they all grow the same way.

- If growing in the ground then just get the soil ready for planting by giving it a hoe over, making sure no weeds are going to come up. Make a drill line if on an allotment or if, like me, you're using raised beds, then just make 1-2cm holes (with a dibber, or occasionally just an old pen) where you want to grow the radishes. They can be sown close together, about 2.5cm and just add one seed per hole.
- A trough pot (you know the ones you get from certain discount shops) that are about 45cm long will allow you to plant three rows of seeds. Or about 20 radishes.
- Water well and leave.
- If growing inside then stand the pots on any windowsill. I haven't grown anything on a north facing windowsill so I doubt germination would be successful however once germinated you could then move them to a north facing windowsill.
- A few days later shoots will begin to appear.
- If you want a continuous crop through the summer then sow seeds every two weeks, either in a new pot, or as a new drill area in the soil.
- Water the soil when it gets dry, don't over water.

The crop can be harvested after three weeks.



Important bit

Even though you can harvest quickly, just pull a radish out to check before you pull a great bunch out and realise they aren't even big enough to make a mouthful. If it's smaller than a 1 penny coin (1 cent) then carefully put it back in the soil and leave the radishes for another week. Check again with just one radish until you are happy with the size.

Once you've grown crops over a season you'll soon get used to knowing pretty quickly how long the radishes take to get to the desired size.

Pest and diseases

Only a problem when growing outside - slugs and snail.

Yes those blighters again. Just check your crops regularly for any sign the slimy critters have been about. Add slug pellets, organic based, if necessary.

Also, if growing outside, you will probably notice small holes begin to appear in the radish leaves. **Flea beetles** rather like the leaves however this is only really a cosmetic issue. They will not harm the radish roots so you can leave them to it. Or if you don't want to tolerate them being attacked then use some fleece, covered loosely over your crop.

Down the line

Radish is just a one season crop so enjoy them while they are growing. They aren't suitable for freezing or drying. For next season either buy a new pack of seeds or let a couple of your summer plants grow to seed and collect for the following year.



Runner Beans

You can't actually get much easier veg to grow than runner beans. In all years of having grown veggies in the garden it's always been the runner beans that have cultivated well and lasted long into the autumn months.

Why grow Runner Beans?

Surely nothing is more tasty than a Sunday lunch of roast beef, roast potatoes, Yorkshire puddings, all finished off with a portion of beans. Or if you're vegetarian then runner beans with carrots, cauliflower and a delicious nut roast. Either way the beans just make a meal that extra bit special because they are only around to buy in the shops for such a short time.

Like most summer vegetables shop bought beans are extremely expensive, you never know how fresh they are or how tough they might be before buying and cooking them. Home grown on the other hand is cheap to produce and you just have to step outside for your daily veg portion.

Bean flowers are a much needed aid to bees and the more bees you have the better your plants will be.

Runner beans originally came from South America, where even today the roots are eaten rather than the pods of the bean plants.

How to grow

Prepare soil: March

Seed sowing time: May (Outdoors)/ April to May (Under cover)

Thinning out: Thin plants to one up each cane

Position: Full sun/semi shade - sheltered from wind

Plants per square foot (30cm x 30cm): 8



Plants per container: It is possible to grow in a pot but it needs to be pretty deep (at least 60cm) - 2 plants

Harvesting time: July-September

Don't buy runner bean plants, seriously. It's so easy to grow them from seed you'd be wasting good money if you bought shop plants.

Just buy a packet of seeds which range from 50p up to £2.50. You'll get that payment back in one harvest of beans, that'd you'd otherwise pay in a shop.

I've only ever grown the Scarlet Emperor and Lady Di varieties, but both types have produced good harvest and have a different taste to one another.

You can either grow the seed indoors from late April in pots. I tend to grow mine in 12cm pots (two seeds per pot). Or wait until May/June and plant the seed into the ground.

Preparation

Unlike other fruit & veg detailed in this guide runner beans do take up space. Not a lot, but they can't really be grown in pots as you need a few plants to keep you going through the season. Having said that I have grown runner beans in pots and they did really well.

I usually grow between 10-12 plants and that's more than enough for 2 people over the summer season.

- A patch of ground 1msq (or raised bed), or even one of those pop up veg bags will be ideal for growing the runners.
- If using old soil, fork it over, top it up and add mulch to it in the form of either manure or garden compost. Dig it in well though. Runner beans like a lot of water so to save you a bigger job later on add as much mulch below the surface as you can now. If you've got clay type soil this will also help the soil structure and prevent the bean's roots from potentially rotting in wet soil.
- Create a runner bean structure. This is the fun part. [Using canes \(bamboo or the more environmentally friendly hazel\), and lots of string, construct a support system for your beans.](#) Depending on the space you have this could be anything from the



wigwam design to having rows of canes in a straight line. Be as adventurous as you like - train them over a fence, an arch or even a doorway to make the most of the space you have. As long as the beans have access to good soil and lots of sun they will grow well.

Sowing and Growing

- Having grown your seeds in a pot, by the end of May the seedlings should be ready for planting outside.
- Place the runner bean plant next to it's support or if planting the seeds then just place two seeds next to the cane support and once germinated, eliminate the smaller of the plants to leave just one seedling by the cane.
- Then its just a case of making sure the plants start to run up those canes, by encouraging the runners to twist round their supports. Once they take hold there is no stopping them from reaching up to 8ft (2.5m), although if you want you can pinch the top of the plants when they reach your desired height.
- Water in and leave. Don't over water until the plants show signs of flowering. This will make the plant put more of it's effort into making flowers rather than green leaves which will then produce more beans.
- You can of course feed the plants, if you wish but the mulch already added to the soil earlier will give the plants pretty much all the feed they need.
- Add further mulch of straw or manure to stop water evaporating from the ground on those hot summer days, and this will cut down on the time you have to spend watering.
- By late July the pods will be ready for picking. Pick small and often (every day) to begin with to encourage the plant to create more flowers and then pods.

Easy peasy!

Important bit

- Runner beans do best in deep enriched soil, so the more rotted compost/manure you can add before hand the better.



- However the plants can't tolerate soil that has recently had manure added to it, they will die if you plant them in too early. So be sure to leave at least three weeks between adding nutrients to the soil and planting.

Pests and Diseases

Just watch out for that green fly! They will attack the youngest shoots on the plants if not kept in check. Enough greenfly will mean no shoots, which mean no flowers, which mean no beans.

No need ever to use harmful chemicals. There are many non-chemical treatments you can use on your beans. Horticultural soap, companion planting, and the ever faithful - use your fingers to squish the little blighters all works wonders.



Rhubarb

Some might say that rhubarb is an acquired taste. It's certainly the most tart of fruits to have as an after dinner pudding, but there it sits firmly on our British menu as one of the more traditional favourites, and with good honour.

If you've ever eaten cooked rhubarb you'll know the sharp taste it gives but is the perfect accompaniment to custard. It can be made into a crumble or a pie

Why grow Rhubarb?

Given the amount of sugar required to make rhubarb palatable you wouldn't think it was a very healthy crop to grow. However you might be surprised to learn that a portion of rhubarb has 35% of the recommended daily calcium intake and 13% of vitamin C. On top of that it can help to lower cholesterol and if eaten in quantity can even be a laxative which is especially useful if you have trouble going to the toilet.

The other great thing about rhubarb is that harvesting from the plant just goes on and on and on - from April to August, which is pretty long for any fruit. Not only that but if you get a sudden glut, the stalks can be cooked and frozen and kept for at least another three months giving you summer fruit even in the depth of winter.

How to grow rhubarb

Seed sowing time: Not required - easier to buy a root crown.

Planting time: Late Feb-March

Position: Any

Plants per square foot (30cm x 30cm): Due to it's eventual root size it's not ideal to grow in a square foot area.

Plants per container: A deep pot is required (at least 60cm) and wide (at least 38cm/3 litre). This will be enough space for one plant.



Harvesting time: From February (if forcing is applied), otherwise April-August

Rhubarb can be grown from seed but it's much easier to buy root crowns. You can either buy it in a pot, from your local garden centre (usually about £2-4), all year round

You can buy dormant crowns between autumn and spring, from garden centres, pound shops and supermarkets.

I'd either opt for the pot plant or the crowns for ease of planting and harvesting quicker.

Rhubarb isn't too fussed where it is grown but try to find an area in your plot where the plant will get at least 3 hours of sun during the summer months.

Dig a hole and either place the crown in the hole and cover up, or add the potted plant to the hole and soil up around the plant. Water well and leave.

No pruning, no feeding and no other regular maintenance required other than to keep watering the plant in warm weather and start picking the stalks when they are big enough.

Important bit

- Don't eat the leaves, they are **extremely** poisonous.
- If you're planting crowns then the rhubarb can't really be harvested in the first year. Leave it to grow and die back naturally the first year so it puts all its energy into being the best plant it can be for the second year. It's very tempting to pull a couple of stems the first year but this will only make the plant work harder in places it shouldn't be. Leave it be and you'll be much rewarded come the following summer.
- Pick little and often. One fully grown 2 yr old plant is sufficient for two adults throughout the summer but just be sure not to pick too many stems at once else the plant will have trouble recovering.



Pests and Diseases

Just the two:

- **Slugs/snails** will happily munch through all the green leaves, and new stems causing the shoots to look rather sorry for themselves. Eradicate by keeping the surrounding area free of slug/snail homes. Going out after dark to pick as many off the plant as you can really keeps the population down.
- **Aphids** who love nothing better than the delicious taste of new shoots. Use organic soap spray or eradicate as many as possible using your fingers and thumbs.

Down the line

Once you're rhubarb is settled in it will grow vigorously. Being a perennial means it's well suited to frost and snow so don't worry about the weather hitting it after Autumn. It will die down naturally and pop up again the following spring.



Strawberries

Nothing says summer like strawberries. Pretty expensive both in the shops, and the PYO places (which undoubtedly is a lot of fun), this is why strawberries are an excellent choice for growing at home instead. Plus they are incredibly easy to grow.

Why grow strawberries?

The great thing about this fruit is it can be eaten fresh off the plant(s), frozen, stewed, preserved and even dried so when people say the strawberry season is short, what they actually mean is the picking fresh is relatively short, if you can resist eating them all at once you could store them for up to six months. Combine that with a clever planting scheme and you could have up to nine months worth of strawberries in supply. Not bad for such a little fruit.

Strawberries are a fantastic source of vitamin C. Just 7 fruits make up one portion of the recommended five a day (who would only eat 7?!), plus the fruit has great antioxidants which fight all those free radicals around your body.

So strawberries are definitely good news fruit.

Further to that we come back to the cost element. Strawberries are expensive in shops not because the crops are hard to cultivate, and especially not because they can't grow enough plants to make it profitable. They are costly because there is no other way to pick the fruit other than by hand which means labour costs. That is why the GYO came into it's own.

That said if you're going to pick someone else's fruit, well you might as well pick your very own home grown!

How to grow strawberries

Runner planting time: May



Position: South facing or semi shade.

Plants per square foot (30cm x 30cm): Due to their capacity of throwing out runners at alarming speed it's not an ideal crop for square foot gardening.

Plants per container: A deep pot is required (at least 30cm) and wide (at least 38cm/3 litre). This will grow between 4-6 plants. You can also buy specially made strawberry planters made from either plastic or terracotta which allow space for up to 8 plants. Don't forget strawberries are runners - so could equally be grown from hanging baskets. It's not something I've personally tried but always worth a go!

Harvesting time: June-July

You can buy a set of runner plants from garden centers and online for anywhere between £5 - £24 depending on how many you get in a set. Some places sell just one variety, whereas if you want to keep the harvest going for longer three varieties are better to grow and will be sold, usually in sets of four x the three varieties, giving you 12 plants.

Yes I think the plants are expensive too but if I told you that once you bought them you'd never have to buy any more ever again, would that sound more tempting? I thought so. *I shall tell you more at the end of the chapter.*

Preparation

Decide where you're going to grow them and even more importantly how much space you're going to allow. You can grow the plants in pots, dedicated pop up (plastic) planters, terracotta planters and raised beds.

Strawberry plants are usually called 'runners' This is because they spur out little runners as they grow, along the ground.

I've grown mine, in previous years, in a pop up planter and it was very successful. It takes up very little room, only needs a bag of compost to fill (about 45 ltrs), and holds up to eight plants. The planter has deliberate holes around the side of the planter and as you fill it up



with compost you add the plants, poking them through the holes. By high summer the fruits are trailing down the planter.

Planting

- If you're going to grow in the ground - fork the space over, add compost or manure and plant the runners, in rows.
- Water the plants and keep watering well in dry weather.

Here's the important part:-

Even though you can buy plants in May *you're not going to get a heavy crop this same yr.* Strawberries like to get established before they really start to get *fruity*.

If you plant any time in May, right up to September you will not get any/much fruit. If you see places saying otherwise, don't get fooled! Varieties are a plenty but strawberries, as a plant, does not change it's habit. You're buying now to invest for next summer.

Fast forwarding to next May...

Your plants are once again showing new signs of growth. They have survived the past winter through having either been sheltered or have had cloches covering them, and look well established in their new home.

- If growing the plants in the ground now is the time to add straw, or matting around the base of each plant, and add slug pellets. If using a planter then you don't need to worry.
- Continue to water the plants.
- Feed the plants, preferable liquid feed, especially if in planters or pots.
- Watch the fruit grow
- Get excited
- Shoo the birds away from the developing fruit, round about late May (I cover mine with netting)...and



- Pick your own strawberries from June onwards.

Pests and diseases

- Aphids and slugs/snails are the two most common pests you're going to have to do battle with. However in my experience of growing strawberry plants organic slug pellets work wonders to keep the slugs at bay, while horticultural soap gets rid of any nasty aphid attacks
- Frost damage will be visible to the plants if not protected enough over winter. The leaves begin to turn brown or black and look decidedly ugly. Cut them away and the plant should begin throwing out new leaves later on in the year.
- Mildew. This is created when there is too much moisture and not enough air getting to the plant. The plant starts to have a grey, furry like appearance and will eventually die. So that's why it's important to keep the fruit off the ground by using straw etc. If growing in pots/planters allow the plant full light and air on the hottest of days and don't over water the plants.

As always check the plants regularly and deal with any problems as soon as you see them. That way any issues can be kept under control much easier.

Never buying strawberry plants again

Okay, so you know how I said earlier that plants were expensive to buy? You'll find that the plants you bought will last three to five years before they need replacing. Every yr around July onwards the plants will begin to throw out runners. These are your new plants!

Take the strongest runner from each plant, and add it to a little 7cm pot, while still attached to the mother plant. Or if growing in the ground, peg the runners into the soil. Wait four weeks and then sever it from the mother plant. Keep the new plants in a grow house over winter and plant as above.





Sweetcorn (Maize)

I love sweetcorn. It's high sugar-content might not be popular on some diets but I can assure you it's the best type of sugar you can get in your daily diet because it's all natural and taste wonderful.

But whether you can digest it or not it's a pretty impressive crop to grow, and as I always say regarding the sugar content - 10 cobs are still better for you than 1 chocolate bar/biscuit so don't be put off completely.

Sweetcorn originally came from Native America, it was brought to Europe in 1779 and quickly production of the vegetable was taken up because it was easy to grow, took up little space compared to the harvest it could give and would store well (frozen).

Why grow Sweetcorn?

One of the main reasons to grow corn yourself is because aside from taking up little space, you can grow far more varieties than the bog standard yellow types you see at the supermarket. It's also very worth while growing yourself because more and more corn you eat is [now coming from GM growing areas](#). If that doesn't freak you out I don't know what would!

Sweetcorn has the most beautiful taste to it when home grown. The sugars that make the cobs so tasty are soon lost in transit when transported from field to shop but at home you can harvest and eat within 10 minutes thus all the best flavours are kept making it the most enjoyable meal I can think of straight from your garden.

How to grow Sweetcorn

Seed sowing time: April (Outdoors)

Thinning out: Plant 3 seeds per space and once germinated get rid of the two weaker ones.



Second thinning: Not required

Position: South facing or semi shade.

Plants per square foot (30cm x 30cm): 3

Plants per container: The wider the pot the better because sweetcorn needs to be grown in blocks to aid pollination. At least 60cm wide and 60cm deep to ensure plants don't fall over in the wind. That would allow enough space for 3 plants.

Harvesting time: August-September

If you're going to grow corn it's worthwhile just taking a bit of time looking at all the [different varieties that can be sown](#). There are also different size corn from the more usual full size cobs to the miniature sweet cobs sometimes referred to as babycobs.

While any seed packets denoting F1 in the title will primarily ensure strong plants and plenty of cobs they are mostly hybrids, so it's worth trying out alternative varieties which produce multicoloured cobs or for an extra ten points try out a heritage variety to ensure the traditional non-hybrid corn plants keep going.

- Sow from seed indoors from end of April, and outdoors from May to June. Add two seeds per pot.
- When sowing outside prepare the area and add in fertilizer (manure) to ensure good fertile soil. Sweetcorn tend to suffer in heavy soils where rain can't drain away quick enough. So if the area can't be made free draining it's always worth growing the plants in containers, pots or even potato planters.
- Because the plants don't take up an awful lot of room (compared to say cabbages, beans or fruit plants) they can be sown and grown in blocks or rows, between 30-35cm apart. I've tried both and either way works well. *In a small plot (1m x 1.5 m) I've managed to grow at least 6 plants in the past with success.*
- The plants will grow fairly quickly through June. Keep them watered well, especially in dry periods, and watch out for pests (see below). If sown outside be sure to remove any weeds so the plants aren't competing for space.
- Pollination happens via the wind, aided by plants grown close together. So you don't need to worry about them setting fruit if you are growing more than 1 variety in any given space.



- If the plants are grown individually be sure to stake them as a gust of wind may well topple the plant over.
- At the end of the season, about August/Sept time the tassels on the end of the cobs will start to turn brown. The cobs can be tested for harvesting by taking a grain (from the middle of the cob) and squeezing it between your fingers. If the liquid that is extracted is cream in colour then it's ready for harvesting!

Important Bit

- Don't do like I have done in the past and keep any spare seeds in a warm room because this just scuppers any germination. Instead keep any left over seeds in a cool, dark room ready for the following yr.
- Avoid picking any of the cobs until you are ready to eat them. They will keep in the fridge for a few days but as soon as the cobs are picked the sugar starts to get converted to starch and the unique flavour rapidly gets lost. Get your pan boiling and then grab your cobs!

Pests and Diseases

Slugs and snails. These guys will just munch through any seedlings in a blink of an overnight period. Be sure to either protect the seedlings (in pots), or go on a hunt round the plot most nights to keep the pests at bay.

Mice love the seeds and will actively hunt them out in both outside pots and in the ground, so again protect in the form of fleece or netting until the plants have germinated.

Down the line

Each plant should produce two cobs at least.

If you get a glut of cobs there are two ways you can preserve the corn:



1. Freeze - blanch the cobs for 5 minutes, wrap and store in freezer
2. Dry - allow the cobs to stay on the plant as long as possible, then take the cobs and hang them somewhere indoors to dry for at least 28 days. Once fully dry the kernels can be stripped from the cob and kept in airtight jars ready to be used again in soups and stews.



5 Reasons to Make Your Own Compost & How To Do It

Regardless of how much space you've got available to grow plants you've probably noticed quite quickly how much compost you go through.

In our medium sized garden it's not unusual for me to get through a whopping 300 litres of the stuff via my raised beds or potting up my chillies in a single year. *That can start to get pretty expensive.*

However not all compost is created equal. Some has peat in it (which I won't discuss now), some have growing formulas added and some, well some are just made up of veg peelings, grass cuttings, fallen leaves and various other materials. It's called home made compost and it's the best you can get.

If you haven't had a go at making your own compost, don't be shy. Here are good reasons to give it a try.

Five reasons to Make Your Own Compost:

1. It's easy. Yup, it really is. *Below I'll show you how.*
2. It saves you money. Rather than spending huge amounts on building up the good nutrients in your soil, compost will be able to do this for you, every single yr.
3. It's ecological. Not only does it cut down on your household waste but it then stops all that rubbish ending up in landfill.
4. It's great for your plants. You can make the perfect compost. You have complete control over what the compost is made up of - so if you want it for acid loving plants you add more bark chippings but if you want it for vegetables then you add more peelings from your Sunday dinner.
5. You'll have compost for your gardening needs all year round. If you've forgotten to buy that bag of compost from the garden centre you need worry



no more, you have a resource just sitting there making you compost while you wait.

So now you've got all the reasons you ever need to give home composting a go, how do you go about it?

Making Compost - the easy way

First of all decide where your composter will be placed. Will it be indoors for [worm composting](#), (otherwise known as vermicomposting), or outside behind the shed? Wherever it ends up two things need to be considered:

- Can you access it easily, all year via a path (without getting your slippers all dirty)?
- Is it easy to empty. Is there space to get the compost away from the bin without spilling it everywhere first and is there room to move your shovel?
- If placed outside, will the compost get sun hitting it? The warmer the spot the better as this speeds up decomposition.

Then decide on the composting bin. Plastic, home made (pallets and chicken wire), all the way to galvanised steel. The choice is immense but remember to choose something for your needs, and the space you have available for it. *Check with your local council re. compost bins - they very often sell them at discounted prices and sometimes even given them away if they have a recycling campaign on.*

Start the composter off by adding a couple of inches of soil, any soil (as long as it's not previously been contaminated).

Then just start adding everything else, which is either classed as wet or dry materials, as and when they become available to you.

Do add

- All veg and fruit/peelings (wet)



- Shredded paper (dry)
- Grass cuttings (wet)
- Cardboard (dry)
- Dust from your Hoover (dry)
- Dead flower heads (wet)
- Egg shells (dry)
- Tea bags (wet)
- Fallen leaves (wet/dry)

Do not add

- Meat or anything from an animal or fish
- Dog/cat poop
- Milk
- Bread

Be careful not to over do anyone wet/dry material but don't worry if you do, just add more of the other next time. A good compost mix will never smell bad and shouldn't give you a face full of flies when you take the lid off (although the flies are aiding the decomposition process so don't be alarmed!)

Water the compost and turn it over with a fork. The more time you can spend doing this the quicker the composting process will happen but if you leave it the compost will still appear regardless.

Four to six months later you'll open your composter to find the most delectable sight sat there at the bottom - compost. Fine, manageable, dark compost, full of good nutrients, ready to be added to your garden. It really is rather impressive to see and once you start you'll be hard pressed to stop because it's that good to use.



What home compost is not:

Unfortunately home compost is not great for the finer areas of gardening such as propagation, layering, sowing and potting up smaller plants.

For this you need slightly more refined soil. Of course there are 100's of different types of composts to choose from and it can all get rather confusing. However I have recently come across [Westland's website](#) who detail their various composts, really well. I have found this rather helpful for knowing what to buy when, and for what area of planting, to make sure you get the best out of anything and everything you sow and grow.

They also have some further information on making [compost at home](#)

So there you have it - great reasons for making your own compost and an easy way to get started.



The Soil & Mud of It - Getting to Grips with Compost

Do you ever get slightly dismayed by the copious amounts of compost stacked high in garden centres? Do you look at the soil in your garden and wonder why it never does anything you want it to?

Below are just a few points around this rather mysterious organic growing matter.

Question - What's the difference between soil, compost and mud?

Answer - nothing it's just a name by which we call the very ground we walk on. It is a descriptive set of words to also determine the structure of the soil (*we'll get on to that a bit later*).

Not all soil is created equal.

It comes in very different states, made up by thousands of years of lying about (so to speak) and it's very make up (or particle size) determine what you can grow, when, and how you can grow anything you put into it.

So by and large I thought it time we got down to the ground and made mud easy to understand.

Soil structure

If like me you've ever decided to start digging over a patch of ground in your garden you've probably wondered why the hell it's either so easy to dig that nothing sticks to the fork, or impossible to dig and your left caked in wet mud. And why the hell does it never look like the soil they turn over in all those gardening programs?

Well it all comes down to the structure of the soil. There are basically three types of soil in the world:



- **Sandy** - While extremely easy to fork over you tend to find plants not doing so well in these structures because there is nothing for the roots to bind with for drawing much needed nutrients from, which is just as well because there aren't that many to take anyway. It very often sinks and doesn't hold any structure. Even when water is added it soon dries out and moves - just like a sandcastle.
- **Clay** - By comparison clay soil is heavy and sticks to everything. A plant has no problem getting what it needs. In fact very often it has too much of a good thing and ends up being over watered to the point of drowning because the soil takes so long to drain away from the plant roots.
- **Loam** - This is the ultimate, optimum soil structure. It's crumble without being too free draining and holds the required amount of nutrients longer than the other two types of soil because it's a mixture of both structures above. It is easy to dig and easy to plant with. This is the soil you're going to always aim for when growing anything, and it's completely possible to do but you've got to spend some time getting there because it's hard to find, even when bought in bags from the garden centre.

Soil Nutrients

If you're growing anything from scratch in your garden chances are you'll pop to your local garden centre and pick up a bag of compost.

Compost is called compost, rather than soil (even though it is soil) because it's designed specifically for a purpose other than walking on. Compost is like buying a bag of ready made growing medium. It basically has everything you ever need for the plant (or seeds) to start growing and the contents, made up of minerals and fertilizers, will last for anywhere between 4-8 weeks until all the good nutrients are washed out by the rain and regular watering.

That's why I said above it's hard to keep the soil in loam condition!



Back to Soil

When we talk about soil we mean anything outside found in flower beds, lawns, raised beds, allotments and by it's very nature anywhere that is not covered with concrete. Any soil can be cultivated but first you have to know why you need to cultivate it. Soil is a basic material that binds roots of a plant together. As the roots bind with the soil the plant is then able to draw essential water and nutrients through the cells of the roots and spread it up the stem and along all branches and leaves. If the plant is unable to find the necessary nutrients, or indeed water, then it simply dies - death by starvation, *and no one wants to see that happen.*

The magical nutrients are a combination of three different things - moisture, minerals and the PH of the soil.

PH, P-What?

Soil PH is a chemistry measure to determine how acidic or alkaline the makeup of the soil is. The scale ranges from less than 3.5 which is acid to greater than 9 which is all alkaline. Only very few plants can survive in either extremes of the scale. The length to which a soil becomes alkaline or alternatively acidic is determined by either it's location, the weather, near by industry, how old the soil is and of course - whether anything is added to it (compost/manure etc). For instance if the soil is naturally located near high coal industrial areas the water that the soil takes up will be very alkaline based. On the other hand if the soil is located close to areas of heavy rainfall it will be on the acidic side.

Did you know pure water is on the scale at 7.0?

The ideal soil PH would be anywhere between 6.1 and 7.0. At this level plants are perfectly suited, ready to be able to take up nutrients given in the structure and will happily grow.



Anything below and above this level needs some work doing to it to bring it up to the ideal levels.

Don't worry if you don't know the levels exactly - any major imbalance would soon show up on your plants growth (or lack of). Signs of yellowing leaves, lack of flowers, stunted growth and blooms with odd colours will all be a cause of the PH and the lack of nutrients.

So as we now know what structure we need and what level of PH is best for growing conditions, now we need to attain it!

Essential Nutrients

Soil nutrients can sometimes be rather confusing - especially when you're confronted with a zillion and one packs, liquids and powders at the garden centre all offering different enhancements to your plants.

However it all boils down to four major organic/non-organic nutrients:

- Calcium and magnesium
- Nitrogen
- Phosphorus
- Potassium

All fertilizers found as liquids and powders will be made up of varying proportions of the four main nutrients and displayed by numbers on the packaging. For instance tomato feed usually has the numbers N:P:K 6:3:10 on it. This means it's made up of 6 parts nitrogen, 3 parts phosphorus and 10 parts potassium (aka potash) and is the perfect balance for ensuring plants grow healthy and strong. However this kind of feed will not keep the soil structure maintained nor will it help keep the nutrients locked in for long so you have to start adding to the soil before you add in any plants.

Bone meal, manure, lime, fish and blood are other big sources of organic materials that can be added before any planting takes place and will not only add the much needed nutrients



to your soil, but can change the PH levels and more importantly change the structure of the soil. Manure is a very good example of this.

Manure helps to breakdown the structure of very heavy clay soil, and it can also help to bind very loose sandy soil. It's well worth investing in this for any vegetable planting as it will help to get the texture of the soil much more workable and get those plants growing and feeding from the soil to produce abundant fruits.

So next time you look at turning over some soil in your cultivation patch remember three things:

1. If it feels too heavy or too light when digging, add in some organic fertilizer
2. Test the soil before planting anything that requires a more acidic PH levels (Many shrubs and trees prefer soil on the acidic side)
3. Remember to keep topping up the soil with organic nutrients once the plants are established



End of the Guide

So that's it folks You've made it to the end of the guide!

I hope you've enjoyed reading the Super Simple Guide to Cultivating Your Own Crops and it's given you some ideas and inspiration to give it a go yourself.

If this guide has been useful to you then please pass it onto someone else who would like to grow their own crops.

Also if you like this guide then please do me a huge favour - share it about on Social media. The more people that get hold of this guide the more people we can get outdoors growing some crops this summer.

Finally if you have any questions or spot any spelling or technical mistakes in the guide then I'd love for you to get in contact with me and let me know.

Just drop me a note (we don't do formal over here) at:

sophie.cussen@gmail.com

[Twitter](#)

[Forget Me Not Facebook Page](#)

Cultivating doesn't start and end at the guide - I'm here to help, any time.

Finally but by no means last...

To all of you I dedicated this guide because 'growers' and cultivators are changing the world into a much better place every single day.

I'd also like to say a big thank you to Roxanne Redekopp for being my dedicated Beta on this project, you were such a star to read the material and spot those all too regular spelling mistakes.



Thank you for reading this guide. Enjoy the outdoors

**Sophie Cussen
March 2015**

