

# Grow Your Own Food

Tips and advice for better food, better health and a better environment.  
Plus, celebrity recipes and community success stories.



## Space to Grow Glasgow

Supported by



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## Space to Grow

Space to Grow is a partnership programme that supports outdoor activities that engage people in growing food, physical activity and healthy eating. Space to Grow is funded by the Wheatley Group, Cube Housing Association and the Royal Horticultural Society, and run by The Conservation Volunteers. It is delivered through running Green Gym® sessions and engagement with local primary schools and the wider community in North West Glasgow, Maryhill.

This booklet is based on *Grow Your Own Food*, a guide developed for *Health for Life* programme in Birmingham, funded by the Mondeléz International Foundation.

Every day TCV works across the UK to create healthier and happier communities for everyone – communities where our activities have a lasting impact on people’s health, prospects and outdoor places. Whether improving wellbeing, conserving a well-loved outdoor space or bringing people together to promote social cohesion, combat loneliness or enhance employment prospects, TCV works together with communities to deliver practical solutions to the real life challenges they face. TCV delivers Green Gym® sessions that help people get active outdoors, improve their environment and grow their own fruit and vegetables for a healthier lifestyle.

# Welcome...

...to our handy booklet to help us all grow better food, eat more healthily and become more active outdoors.

This booklet shows you how to take positive action in your own space, on your allotment and with your community. Whatever space you have, from a large garden to a small window box, there is something for you to grow.

Food tastes even better when you grow it yourself, caring for your crops as they develop from little seedlings to fully grown plants, and then harvesting them when they're ripe, full of healthy nutrition and bursting with flavour.

You just can't beat the flavours of freshly harvested tomatoes, squash, carrots and radish – to name but a few.

For full-on community food growing action in the North West Glasgow, Maryhill TCV is developing new community garden sites and also delivers regular Green Gym® sessions where you can get involved with growing food, eating healthily, increasing physical activity, all whilst undertaking conservation and wildlife habitat improvements. To find out more about your local sites, see pages 5-6.

***So what are you waiting for?***

## Join in, feel good!

# Food growing makes good sense

Each link of the food chain uses lots of energy, starting with farming through processing, packaging, refrigeration in warehouses and supermarkets, transporting in our cars from the shops, and then storing and cooking at home. So, when you grow your own, you are helping the wider environment as well as doing yourself some good.

We all know about getting your 'five-a-day' and home-grown food is a great way of working towards that. You might have thought about choosing organic produce but been put off by the price. Well, when you grow your own, YOU can decide what (if any) chemicals you use to control pests and promote growth.

We hope this booklet will encourage you to:

- Grow your own vegetables and fruit
- Eat seasonal produce
- Tackle growing in small places

It will also help you find like-minded people to create community food enterprises, share space and harvests, and connect with nature and wildlife.

# Space to Grow in the community

**The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) receives funding through the Wheatley Group, Cube Housing Association and the Royal Horticultural Society to promote activities that engage local people in growing food, physical activity, healthy eating and cookery.**

TCV is delivering the programme to the Wyndford Estate in North West Glasgow, Maryhill and the wider community and offers a range of activities to encourage everyone to lead healthier lifestyles. You can take part through:

## **GREEN GYM® SESSIONS**

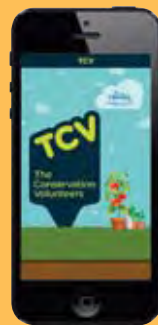
A Green Gym® provides the chance to transform derelict land into community growing space, which often also includes vital conservation work. Green Gym® sessions will help you become physically and mentally healthier by taking part in activities to improve the local environment, such as:

- Growing your own food
- Making the most of community gardens or allotments
- Learning about seasonal horticulture
- Wildlife habitat improvements

Find out more about our local sites and how to get involved on pages 5 and 6.

## **A FREE PHONE APP**

Through funding from the Mondelēz International Foundation, for the *Health for Life* programme in Birmingham, a phone app is available to provide you with handy hints, tips, calendars and food growing advice on how to grow fruit and vegetables. Work out what you can grow in your patch!



The phone app is now available on all platforms and can be downloaded as follows:

The iPhone app can be found at [\*\*tinyurl.com/tcvapp-iphone\*\*](http://tinyurl.com/tcvapp-iphone)

The Android app can be found at [\*\*tinyurl.com/tcvapp-android\*\*](http://tinyurl.com/tcvapp-android)

The web version is available at [\*\*growingapp.tcv.org.uk\*\*](http://growingapp.tcv.org.uk)

## **FREE SEED PACKS**

Look out for your free Space to Grow Seed Pack that we are giving out throughout the Wyndford Estate. We will distribute packets of seeds to members of the local community, primary schools and beyond. If you haven't had yours yet, don't worry, we will be distributing more free packets of seeds to help you grow your own delicious vegetables.





## Space to Grow spaces

Two community gardens are located in the North West of Glasgow within the Wyndford Estate, Maryhill.

### **MARYHILL HUB**

The Maryhill Hub run by Glasgow City Council's Community Safety Department is an impressive facility offering Wyndford residents, surrounding communities and groups a range of activities.

The community garden is situated behind the Maryhill Hub. It is a centrally located space and offers the best opportunity to create a focal point for food growing activities including on-site training. The site has a growing number of raised beds and is ever-expanding. The space now has weekly Green Gym® sessions taking place and a regular group of food growers taking part.

### **WYNDFORD DRIVE SHELTERED HOUSING**

The Wyndford Drive Sheltered Housing is owned by Cube Housing Association where one of our community gardens is located. There is a landscaped centre courtyard situated in the middle of the housing complex, which offers a range of food growing opportunities. Weekly





Wyndford Drive Sheltered Housing

Green Gym® sessions are delivered in the transformed courtyard where Green Gym® participants have built raised beds, vertical gardens and a compost bin, sowed a variety of vegetable seeds and prepared the ground for growing.

Each day in the garden is different and will depend on the season but you can expect us to be doing some of the following tasks:

- Sowing seeds
- Planting and transplanting seedlings and pot plants
- Watering and weeding
- Learning and taking care of our plants



- Chatting and planning garden projects
- Composting
- Building insect and bug boxes
- Drinking tea and coffee!

If you want to join in the fun for free, please contact TCV – see back page.

### LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Local primary schools across Maryhill are also getting the growing bug. Schools have taken part in our seed growing activity promoting food growing, physical exercise and healthy eating. Two topics of ‘growing cress, plants we eat and healthy eating’ and ‘growing herbs from seeds and cuttings and herbs we eat’ were delivered. Sessions took place on the school grounds along with regular trips to the community gardens so that children could join in with food growing activities.



# No garden? No problem!



Windowsill strawberries



Herbs in a window box



**You really don't need much room to grow food. People even grow carrots in a well drained old bucket filled with sandy soil.**

Herbs, tomatoes, salad leaves, French beans, peas, cucumbers, courgettes, peppers, chillies, aubergines, strawberries, nasturtiums, chard and even potatoes all grow well in containers.

You can grow 'cut and come again' salads and herbs in a window box right through into autumn.

Alpine strawberries are intensely flavoured and make great hanging basket plants. Yellow and red cherry tomatoes, peppers and aubergines make colourful displays in tubs and hanging baskets too.

Even in a tiny garden or veranda you can grow your own veg. Make your veg box out of a few planks of wood and some peat-free compost. Mark out a grid on the surface and grow a few plants in each square, sowing successive crops of salads, beans, peas and chard to keep you well fed throughout the summer.

Courgettes, squashes and cucumbers like rich soil, so add extra manure or give a liquid feed during the growing season. Grow them in old compost sacks or sturdy plastic bags, but be prepared for the leaves to take over.



Rhubarb in a growbag!



# Seasonal food

The great thing about volunteering with The Conservation Volunteers on a Space to Grow project is that you will grow food close to where you live and be able to harvest it in prime condition.

It will be some of the freshest and tastiest food you can eat, as well as having great nutritional value.

Producing your own food helps you keep track of the growing seasons, which is useful knowledge, even for foods you may not be growing yourself. For example when produce such as asparagus, strawberries or beans are in season, the shop price is cheaper and you can make the most of it. Whether you are growing it yourself or picking up a bargain at the market, it's worth waiting for the right time of year to eat these foods. You will soon find that local and in-season fruit and vegetables are also a lot more-tasty than those imported from abroad.

Strawberries are available in the UK during the spring (from April and early May if they are grown in poly-tunnels) through to the first frosts of October.

The joy of anticipating the short (but very sweet) plum season is only surpassed by tucking into gorgeous plum crumbles and bottling plum jam to enjoy on toast in the winter. Juicy golden and dark purple plums are



available from July for only a few weeks, so get them at the first opportunity.

Crisp and sweet apples and pears are harvested from our orchards from the middle of August throughout the autumn. Raspberries are in season from the middle of summer through to the autumn, depending on the variety.

When you grow broad beans, French beans or stick beans (also known as runner beans) in succession, you will be harvesting from May through to October.

Nutritionally-packed root vegetables like celeriac and parsnips are traditionally harvested after the frosts, which intensifies the flavours.

**Check which foods are in season using our handy new phone app – see page 4 for details.**



# Growing tips

## VEGETABLES

Most vegetables are easy to grow from seed. The growing instructions on the back of the packet have more detailed information.

### No greenhouse to start off early sowings?

Use a sunny windowsill. You can sow into pots or buy a windowsill propagator. If you don't want to sow indoors, work out where the final location will be for your vegetables. Sow them directly into this location and give them some protection; cover the area with some horticultural fleece or a cloche. Some seedlings do not like to be transplanted, so sowing them directly to your patio container or your window box is ideal!

If your seeds are large enough to handle, space them out into your seed tray, or sow two per pot. If your seeds are small, sow thinly into your growing medium – you can always thin out after germination.

Cover your seeds with a thin layer of compost or vermiculite and wait for the seedlings to appear!

If you plan to move your seedlings outdoors they will need to acclimatise first. This is called 'hardening off', and can be done by placing them in a cold-frame or leaving them outside in the daytime. Remember to protect them from frosts and extreme weather.

For seeds grown in pots, when the seedlings are large enough to handle, transplant into small individual containers or their final location. If they are already in their direct location, thin the seedlings. These thinnings can often be great to use in salads.

Ensure that you space your seedlings with enough space and ventilation for them to flourish. You can avoid having too much food at once by sowing at two weekly intervals. This means that you'll have vegetables and salads ready for harvesting at different times, potentially all through the summer.

With some crops, you can plant different varieties that mature at different times. It's easy to grow salads and herbs all year round. Some crops will grow and be ready to pick really quickly, so why not try sowing some radish, coriander or salad leaves and you could be eating your own homegrown crops in around 20 days.

## FRUIT

Most fruit is grown from rooted stock and you can buy bush plants, cordons or trees. Go to your local nursery or check out The Conservation Volunteers online shop.

Buying bare rooted stock in the autumn and winter from [www.tcv.org.uk/shop](http://www.tcv.org.uk/shop) can be a cheaper option.

Read the advice label. Most fruit need a sheltered site that receives sun. Prior to planting, dig over the soil and mix well-rotted compost into the ground. Soil needs to be well drained and not waterlogged.

Most fruit bushes and trees prefer to be planted in the spring or autumn.

For bare rooted plants – spread the roots over the ground and cover with soil.

For pot-grown plants, ensure that the plant is slightly below ground level. Don't plant out when the ground is frozen.

*More growing tips overleaf...*

# Growing tips

## PARSLEY

**RICH IN** Vitamins A, B12, C, K  
**FINAL LOCATION** ✓Greenhouse ✓Container  
✓Veg patch ✓Window box

### SOWING

Early sowing: Greenhouse  
Late sowing: Outside  
February - September  
Temp: 10-15°C 50-60°F  
Sow thinly onto warm and moist compost.

**GERMINATION** 21 days

**PLANTING OUT** Thin to 20cm (8 inches) apart

**HARVEST** 13 weeks from sowing

**TIP** In colder months protect from frost with cloches

**RECIPES** Pasta carbonara

## BEETROOT

**RICH IN** Dietary fibre  
**FINAL LOCATION** ✓Container ✓Vegetable patch  
✓Window box

### SOWING

March-June. Soil needs to be warm, finely raked and well fertilised. Sow seeds direct in the ground at a depth of 2.5cm (1in) and at 10cm (4in) intervals. Sow the seeds at weekly / fortnightly intervals to ensure a succession of crops to harvest.

**GERMINATION** 10+ days

**PLANTING OUT** You will need to thin out the seedlings when they reach 2.5cm (1in) high to spacings of 15cm.

**HARVEST** June - October. Ready in 9-12 wks

**TIP** Seedlings and leaves make a very tasty salad leaf.

**PROBLEMS** Bolting

**RECIPES** Beefed up sarnies

## CARROTS

**RICH IN** Vitamins A and C

**FINAL LOCATION** ✓Container (for short rooted varieties) ✓Vegetable patch

### SOWING

Outside in the final location, preferably a sunny position and well drained soil. If you have soil that is full of stones or heavy clay this will affect the growth of the carrots - it would be better to grow in containers. Early cultivars Jan - March, others April - July. Sow 1 cm (1/2 in) deep in rows 15 cm (6 in) apart, thin to 5-7.5 cm (2-3 in) apart.

**GERMINATION** 10-14 days

**HARVEST** Carrots will be ready for harvesting about 12-16 weeks after sowing.

### TIP

Be careful when weeding or thinning around the carrots as if you crush the foliage, the smell can attract carrot fly, which is a pest of carrots. Keep weeds down between rows by hand weeding - if you allow weeds to grow they may end up crowding out the carrots.

**PROBLEMS** Carrot fly, forked carrots

**RECIPES** Carrot soup, carrot muffins

## LETTUCE

**RICH IN** Vitamin A

**FINAL LOCATION** ✓Greenhouse ✓Container  
✓Vegetable patch ✓Window box

### SOWING

Greenhouse: early sowings  
Outdoors: after risk of frost has passed. Feb - August. Sow seeds thinly and cover lightly with compost. When sowing outdoors in a vegetable patch rake soil and ensure that it is free from stones. Water well.

**GERMINATION** 10-14 days

**PLANTING OUT** When seedlings are large enough to handle transplant into their final position and protect from frosts.

**HARVEST** May - October

**TIP** Sow at fortnightly intervals to ensure a succession of crops.

**PROBLEMS** Aphids, Birds, Bolting, Grey mould, Slugs, Snails

**RECIPES** Braised lettuce and peas



## RADISH

**RICH IN** Vitamin C

**FINAL LOCATION** ✓Greenhouse ✓Container  
✓Veg patch ✓Window box

### SOWING

Direct in the ground where they are. March to September. Sow thinly in drills 1 cm 1/2 inch deep. Allow 15cm (6 inches) between drills.

**GERMINATION** 4-7 days

**PLANTING OUT** Thin seedlings as necessary

**HARVEST** 4 weeks after sowing

**TIP** Sow in succession every 2 weeks to ensure a constant supply of radish.

**PROBLEMS** Brassicas mildew, Flea Beetle, Slugs, Snails

**RECIPES** Lemon, chilli & radish salad  
Radish & cucumber salad

Feeling daunted by all this? Then just throw, sow and see what happens – it's always great to experiment.

## PEAS

**RICH IN** Vitamins B, C and K

**FINAL LOCATION** ✓Container ✓Vegetable patch  
✓Window box

### SOWING

Greenhouse or direct in final position March - June. If sowing in the greenhouse, use pots and seed compost, place one seed to a pot about 7cm (3 inches) deep. Cover, keep moist and plant out once hardened off and 10cm tall (3in). Sowing directly: Prepare drills 15cm (6in) deep, place pea in drill and cover with soil. Protect seeds from birds and rodents with sticks or nets.

**GERMINATION** 1-2 weeks

**PLANTING OUT** In a sunny position

**HARVEST** June - October

**TIP** If you have problems with mice or pigeons in your area, try starting off in the greenhouse or on the kitchen windowsill.

**PROBLEMS** Mice, pea moth, pigeons, powdery mildew

**RECIPES** Pea & mint soup  
Asparagus, pea and mint salad

## BASIL

**RICH IN** Vitamins A & C, Iron

**FINAL LOCATION** ✓Greenhouse ✓Container  
✓Vegetable patch  
✓Window box ✓Indoors

### SOWING

Greenhouse/Propagator/Windowsill  
Late February - Early June  
Temp: 10-15°C 50-60°F  
Sow seeds thinly and cover with a fine layer of compost or vermiculite. When large enough to handle pot into small individual containers.

**GERMINATION** 14 - 21 days

**PLANTING OUT** May - June, when risk of frost has passed. Sunny well drained position 23cm (9inch) apart.

**HARVEST** July to October

**TIP** Basil can be grown all year round indoors, make regular sowings for a constant supply.

**PROBLEMS** Aphids, leaf/frog hoppers, slugs, snails, whitefly

**RECIPES** Pesto

# Need MORE Space to Grow?

If you don't have enough space in your community garden grounds for raised beds, greenhouses, polytunnels or vegetable beds, why not consider growing on a smaller scale? The produce you will reap is still as tasty and wholesome as ever.

If you're limited on space for growing horizontally, why not consider using vertical space? Make use of those dark coloured gates and fences and grow upwards and onwards. You can even decorate drainpipes with climbing beans! Break up those metal perimeter fences with something brightly coloured, thrifty and quirky such as metal tins with punched drainage holes and attached with wire. You could use

clean tins on windowsills or decorate plant pots using PVA glue and brightly coloured pictures. Alternatively, build or purchase window boxes for painting to brighten up the area and hanging baskets with brackets and screws.

Use the inside window-ledges for extra space to get a head start with seeds in the early spring.

**There are lots of ways to use different containers for growing. Some of these examples are shown here.**

If you want to grow in a more traditional way, but are limited for space, then try growing in containers. Ask community members and friends to bring in any old containers or pots that are no







longer used, give them a lick of paint, and straight away you have a useful, cheap and new space to grow in and around your garden. Maybe use quirky containers; chimney pots, engineering bricks or old cooking oil tins from local restaurants/school kitchen, which make great containers to grow potatoes.

Try using the bags that your compost arrives in as a raised bed. Make sure it is on a pallet so it is raised off the floor and allows water to drain away. These are great for carrots, parsnips and other root veg as they have plenty of depth. Pumpkins will love the space too!

You can even grow your peppers, strawberries and broad beans in a large pot or sow your tomatoes, dwarf and climbing beans in a grow bag, laid down horizontally.

Add life to an old window box by painting them first. Add old tiles, broken crockery or large flat stones for drainage before adding compost. Place your plants where you'd like them and remember to backfill with more compost. Always water whatever you have planted or sown straight away to help them settle in.

Container growing requires more watering and feeding than sowing directly in the ground. This is because they have a shallow depth of soil and limited nutrient supply, so keep topping up with water and feed regularly to keep plants healthy, strong and protect them against pests and disease.

# Tasty chicken salad wraps

These delicious wraps are ideal for packed lunches, making a welcome change from sandwiches.

Serves: 4 adult

**4 soft flour tortillas**

**4 tbsp lower fat soft cheese**

**4 tbsp low-fat natural yoghurt**

**120g skinless, boneless roast chicken breasts chopped**

**100g sweetcorn**

**¼ cucumber (or small bunch of radish)**

**1 pinch ground black pepper**

**2 handfuls lettuce leaves**

Lay out the wraps or tortillas on a clean work surface.

Put the soft cheese and yoghurt in a bowl and mix together until smooth.

Add the chicken, sweetcorn and cucumber. Season with pepper, then mix well.

Spread an equal amount over each wrap, then top with the lettuce.

Roll up each wrap tightly, slice in half, then wrap in cling film. Keep cool until ready to serve.



**Tip 1:** If you're not keen on cucumber or sweetcorn, use grated sliced radish for an extra tangy crunch instead.

**Tip 2:** If you're packing these wraps into a lunch box, try to remember to put a small ice pack in with them to keep them cool and fresh.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION PER PORTION 295 kcal • 22g protein 6g fat, of which 3g saturates 42.5g carbohydrate, of which 6g sugars 2g dietary fibre • 364mg sodium • 0.9g salt
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This recipe has been taken from the Change4Life *Supermeals for under a fiver* cookbook. For more tips and ideas on healthier lifestyles, please visit [www.nhs.uk/Change4Life](http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life)

# Half-the-garden-soup

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall shares a recipe so that we can all enjoy the delights of freshly-harvested vegetables – from plot to bowl in 30 minutes.

**500g onions, sliced**

**olive oil or butter**

**500g-1kg ripe tomatoes**

**salt and freshly ground black pepper**

**some or all of the following:**

**3-4 medium carrots, diced**

**3-4 medium beetroots, diced**

**3-4 medium courgettes, diced**

**a few handfuls of peas**

**a fistful of French or runner beans, roughly chopped**

**a fistful of chard or spinach leaves, finely shredded**

**a fistful of kale or cabbage leaves, finely shredded**

Sweat the onions in a little olive oil or butter in a large pan until softened.

Pour boiling water over the tomatoes, leave for a minute, then drain and peel off the skins.

Chop roughly and add to the onions. Cook gently until thick and pulpy, then add about 500ml cold water (or light



stock) and a good pinch of salt.

Now add the vegetables of your choice, bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Then add the chard or spinach leaves and/or the kale or cabbage.

Top up with a little more boiling water, if you like. Simmer for another 5 minutes, stirring regularly, until all the vegetables are tender, but only just.

Check and adjust the seasoning, then serve immediately, with a drizzle of olive oil over each bowl.

*Seasonal variations:* From late August onwards you can add fresh podded haricot beans (i.e. the white beans inside overgrown French beans) or borlotti beans, or the beans from overgrown runners, to the soup. They should go in with the water and have a good 5-minute simmer before the carrots and the remaining ingredients go in.

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Recipe taken from Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's *THE RIVER COTTAGE YEAR*, published by Hodder & Stoughton, [www.rivercottage.net](http://www.rivercottage.net)



## Join in, feel good

Cube



Wheatley  
Group

**Space to Grow** is a partnership programme funded by the Wheatley Group, Cube Housing Association and the Royal Horticultural Society promoting healthy lifestyle activities across North West Glasgow, Maryhill.

If you'd like to take part in **FREE Green Gym®** sessions or any other of our activities, then please contact Amanda Malcolm:

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