

GROW
YOUR OWN
GRUB

BBC

DIG



bbc.co.uk/digin

Welcome to Dig In, the BBC campaign that gets you growing your own grub in whatever space you have.

There's nothing quite like growing your own. When you've sowed the seeds, cared for your plants and then harvested a tasty crop, it gives you a lovely, warm tingle of pride and satisfaction.

You don't even need an allotment – or wellies! You can use your garden, back yard, balcony or even a plant pot on your windowsill.

We're here to help you every step of the way, from planning your plot (or pot) to cooking up some tasty treats when grub's up. Courgette and carrot muffins anyone?

Even if your carrots come out crooked or your beans are a bit bendy, it doesn't matter – you've grown your own grub. And it'll taste all the better for it.

Ready to grow?

We've got spadefuls of advice to get you growing.

Plan your space

No matter how tight you are for space, we've got some canny ways to help you make the most of what you've got. Check out bbc.co.uk/digin for guides on setting up your garden patch, back yard, balcony or window box.

Get animated

Visit the Dig In website to watch our simple animations on sowing, growing and harvesting the five Dig In veggies. And, of course, this handy pocket guide has all the info you need to get cracking and produce some lip-smacking grub.

Sign up, sign up

Every fortnight our email newsletter updates you with what you need to know as you grow. Visit the Dig In website to enter your email address and register.

Ask the experts

Veggies love to grow, but sometimes things go wrong. Don't panic! Expert help is at hand. If your plants are looking under the weather, send your questions to bbc.co.uk/digin.

On your Patch

Dig In will be touring the UK offering expert advice and veg-growing fun for everyone. Check out our website for dates and locations. And keep your eyes peeled for events at your local library.



BASIL

Sweet Genovese

Sow, sow, sow

May to June

Fill a small pot or pots with moist multipurpose compost. Sprinkle your seeds thinly (about 10 seeds per pot) and cover with a very fine layer of compost.

Place your pots on a warm windowsill. Keep the soil moist but not too wet as the seeds can rot. Seedlings should appear after one or two weeks.

Plant out

Late May to June

After about five weeks your seedlings should be ready to be transferred into individual pots. Tease them out, holding the leaves very carefully so you don't damage the roots, before potting up separately into small pots. Your basil can now be left indoors all summer or planted outside.

Growing your basil outside?

First harden the plants off by standing them outside during the day and bringing them in at night for a fortnight. Their final home needs to be a sunny, sheltered spot. Basil in a pot needs regular feeding – use a general-purpose liquid feed. Water little and often, nip out the tips and remove any flower buds that appear. This will help the plant grow strong and leafy.

Grub's up


July to September

Pick the leaves as soon as they're big enough to use. Be careful not to pick off whole shoots as the plant will take longer to start producing leaves again.

It's a good idea to have several plants growing at the same time so your plants don't get over-picked.



Fragrant and sweet-tasting,
a versatile herb ideal
for windowsills



A quick and easy variety, dark green and delicious

COURGETTE

Black Beauty

Sow, sow, sow

From mid-April

Dig In and gently push each seed into a small pot of multipurpose compost so it stands vertically. Water, allow to drain, then place indoors on a warm windowsill.

- a growing bag from your local garden centre
- a patio pot that is at least 30cm wide filled with multipurpose compost. Choose a sunny spot.

Plant out

Late May to June

After about four weeks you'll be ready to plant out. Don't do this until all threat of frost has gone! First harden them off by standing them outside in a sheltered spot during the day and bringing them in at night for at least a week.

Water works

Courgettes are thirsty veg, especially when in flower and the veg are starting to swell. Give them a good soaking once a week in dry spells. If growing in pots or bags you'll need to water more often.

Grub's up

July to September

To keep plants productive you need to harvest courgettes at least once a week at the height of the season. Once they're around 10cm, use a sharp knife to cut the veg from the plant. Courgettes are best eaten fresh or can be stored for a few days in the fridge.

The hole thing

Dig In and plant each young plant into:

- a football-sized hole filled with a mix of soil and well-rotted manure or compost. Position each plant one metre away from its nearest neighbour

Get more on growing carking courgettes at bbc.co.uk/digin



Short, fat, sweet
and perfect for pots

CARROT

Royal Chantenay Red

Sow, sow, sow

April to July

Dig In and sow your seeds thinly, every 2.5cm or so into:

- a large pot or window box (at least 20cm deep) filled with multipurpose compost (the best option if your garden soil is shallow, heavy or stony) with a layer of stones at the bottom to aid drainage
- well-dug, well-raked soil – it should have a fine, crumbly texture – in a trench no deeper than your thumbnail.

Cover with a fine layer of compost or dry soil and then water. Stand pots in a sunny spot and keep the compost moist.

For a continuous supply of carrots, sow a few seeds every fortnight.

Weed out the weak

Once the seedlings are big enough to handle gently pull out the weaker plants, leaving one carrot every 2.5cm. Try and do this in the evening or on a damp day to avoid attracting carrot fly.

Water works

Water sparingly, being careful not to let the soil dry out completely.

Grub's up

June to September

After about 12 weeks your carrots should be ready for the table. Gently ease them out of the soil with a fork.

FRENCH BEAN

Blue Lake

Sow, sow, sow

Indoors from end of April
Outdoors mid-May to June

Want an early crop?

Sow each seed into a small pot of multipurpose compost, water and allow to drain. Germinate indoors on a warm windowsill.

Be supportive

Your plants will need support to grow. Erect a structure using bamboo canes, netting or trellis (about 1.8m high).

Sowing straight into the ground?

Sow two seeds together every 25cm in line with your support. Space your rows 40-60cm apart. Don't sow if the soil is cold and wet – hang on until it warms up.

Plant out

Late May to June

Indoor seedlings should be ready to plant out after three or four weeks. Don't do this until all threat

of frost has gone. First harden them off by placing them outside during the day and bringing them in at night for at least a week. Dig In and plant two seedlings together into:

- well-dug soil, mixed with manure or compost. Place every 25cm, in rows spaced 40-60cm
- a growing bag
- a large patio pot (four plants in a 45cm pot).

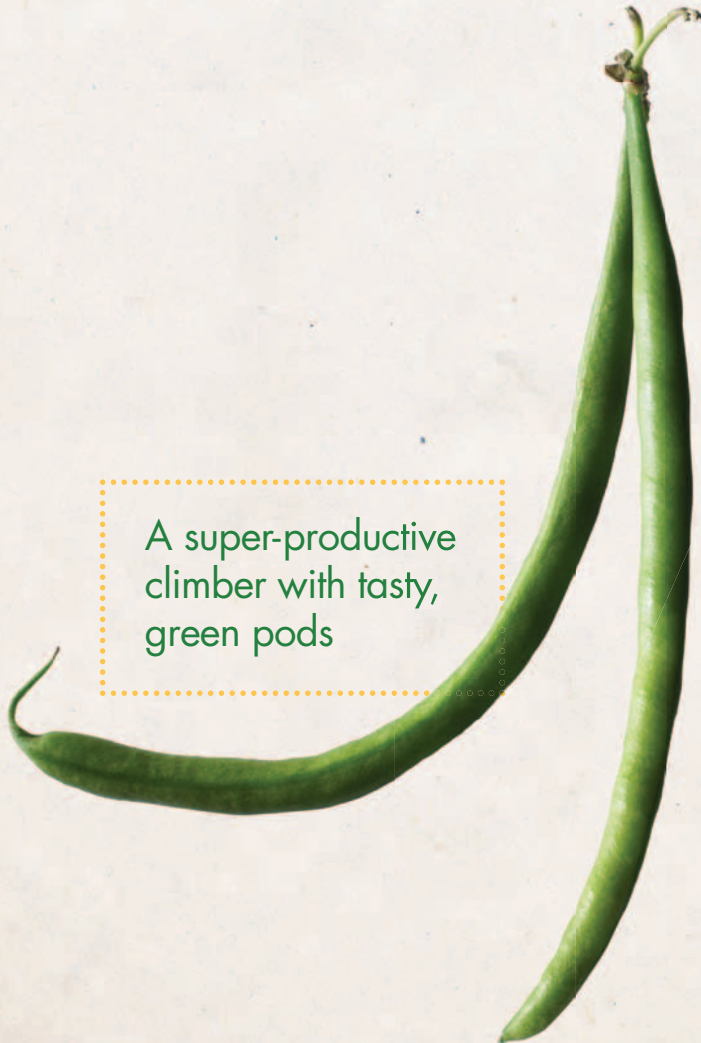
Water works

As your plants get bigger they'll need lots of water, so give them a good soaking in dry weather.

Grub's up

July to September

With luck, you'll be able to start picking beans in July. Make sure you pick the ripe ones every week to keep them cropping.



A super-productive climber with tasty, green pods

SALAD

Mixed Leaves

A tasty mix of crunchy
'cut and come again'
salad leaves



Sow, sow, sow

April to August

Dig In and sow your seeds
thinly into:

- a pot or window box filled with multipurpose compost
 - a growing bag from your local garden centre
 - well-raked soil, in a shallow trench no deeper than your thumbnail
- Cover with a fine layer of soil or compost and then water.

For a continuous supply of salad sow more seeds every few weeks. Space rows 20cm apart. In hot weather, delay sowing until late afternoon.

Keep plants well watered during dry spells, especially those in containers.

Beware of pesky pests

These plants don't need thinning out, but they may need protecting from hungry slugs and snails. Try eggshells around your seedlings, they don't like rough surfaces!

Grub's up

May to October

Leaves should appear within a month.

When they're 10-15cm long, start harvesting by pulling off the outer leaves by hand, or just snip the whole lot off with scissors. Leave 4-5cm behind, and especially avoid the growing tips in the middle so the plants can keep growing and you can keep munching.

Some of the leaves in the mix will grow faster than others, but you should be able to make several harvests before the plants run to seed.

Your Dig In salad packet contains:

Red Salad Bowl, Red Chard, Spinach, Green Lobjoits Cos, Mizuna, Oakleaf Cocardie.

Enjoy your salad days at bbc.co.uk/digin

Dig In deeper

Bitten by the growing bug? The BBC has more help at hand.

bbc.co.uk/gardening

If you love growing your Dig In veg and you're keen to try more, check out the fruit and vegetables section in *Growing Guides*. There are daily tips in the *Gardeners' Calendar*, and if your plot has been invaded by unwelcome guests the *Pest and Disease Identifier* can help.

Gardeners' World on BBC Two

Prefer vegging out in front of the TV? Join the *Gardeners' World* team for practical gardening advice – from basic techniques to fancy design solutions and tips to help you garden on a budget.

Gardeners' Question Time on BBC Radio 4

If you've got some growing pains, tune into *Gardeners' Question Time*. Every week amateur gardeners pose their questions to a panel of experts. Listen to those in the know and write in to get your own Dig In dilemma solved.

bbc.co.uk/weather

Search for your local five-day forecast to check how much watering you'll need to do at the weekend.

bbc.co.uk/food

At harvest time you'll need some tasty recipes for all that grub you've grown. Use the recipe search for scrumptious veggie ideas and some Dig In specialities.

Still hungry for more?

We've hand-picked some expert organisations to support you while you grow.

Royal Horticultural Society

A top gardening charity with a Grow Your Own campaign. On the website you'll find a veg A-Z, downloadable planner and archive of video clips. rhs.org.uk

Garden Organic

A national charity for growing organic grub. Visit the website for monthly gardening tips and downloadable vegetable cards. gardenorganic.org.uk

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

Supports growing in community farms, gardens and allotments. Check out the website to find a farm or garden near you. farmgarden.org.uk

Landshare

If you want to upgrade from pot to plot, visit Landshare. They match people with land to spare with people who want to grow. landshare.channel4.com

Eat Seasonably

Celebrate eating food at its seasonal best. The website has monthly growing tips, an interactive veg calendar and info on growing events where you live. eatseasonably.co.uk

Gardeners Click

The 'Facebook of the gardening world' where you can create a profile, make new friends, share tips and upload photos of your veg. Plus, it's free to use! gardenersclick.com

Get an allotment

If you're keen as a bean and would like your own patch, check with your local council for plots near you. Or visit the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners for more info. nsalg.org.uk

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HELP AT
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