

GROW YOUR OWN GRUB

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BBC

DIG



bbc.co.uk/digin

Welcome to Dig In, the BBC campaign that makes growing your own grub cooler than a cucumber in shades.

You'll love growing your own grub. It's super cheap, there's no wasteful packaging and you get the added pleasure and satisfaction of producing it yourself. Sweet.

Fancy a grow? Come on, Dig In and get your hands dirty.

You don't need an allotment – or wellies! You can use your garden, balcony, window box or even a yoghurt pot on your windowsill.

Plus, we'll help you every step of the way, from planting your seeds to cooking up some tasty recipes when grub's up. Beetroot brownies anybody? We can't get enough of them.

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

Chomping at the carrot to get cracking?

We've got a bunch of ways to help you get growing:

Getting growing

First off, read this handy growing guide. It's got all the info you'll need to help grow some lip-smacking grub.

Dig In to cyberspace

Check out our website bbc.co.uk/digin. We've made some tasty videos to help you grow our five Dig In veggies and you can sign up for our Dig In emails to keep you posted with all the info you'll need as you grow.

Coxy's Blog

Join Radio 1's Sara Cox at bbc.co.uk/digin. She'll be digging in with a blog about her first-time veggie growing escapades. Come and share your growing joys and grumbles with her.

Stop us and grow one

We've gone a bit rock 'n' roll and are going on tour around UK towns and cities in an ice-cream van! Check out bbc.co.uk/digin for when we're heading your way.

Veg out in front of the TV

We'll have regular Dig In updates on Gardeners' World on BBC Two and little gardeners can find us on the Green Balloon Club on CBeebies.



TOMATO

Gardener's Delight

Sow, sow, sow

Indoors, March to April
Dig In and sow your seeds thinly into small pots of moist compost and cover with a fine sprinkling of it. Leave the pots on a warm windowsill until each plant is large enough to go into a small pot of its own.

Germination should take between a week and a fortnight.

When large enough to handle, carefully tease the seedlings apart (holding them by their narrow seed leaves) and pot up individually into small pots. Water and grow on in a light, frost-free place.

Plant out

April to June
After three to four weeks plant into either:
– a 10 or 15 litre pot filled with multipurpose compost
– a growing bag (maximum three plants per bag)
– directly into the ground, roughly half a metre apart.

For best results, choose a sunny, sheltered spot outside (once there is no danger of frost).

Feed and water your toms regularly until nice and ripe. Delightful.

Grub's up

July to October
To get the best flavour, allow fruits to ripen fully on the plant before picking. To encourage more fruits to ripen, pinch out the growing tip of the leader shoot in early September.

Sweet and delicious, Gardener's Delight grow in handy bite-sized portions. With a bit of TLC, you'll get lots of colourful, tasty fruits.

Top tips for toms

Before moving plants outdoors, it's best to acclimatise them to the weather. Stand them outside during the day and bring them in at night for at least a week.

Tie your plants to a garden cane or stout stick for support and pinch out side shoots when they appear where the leaf stalk joins the stem.

Plants in pots or growing bags need more feeding and watering than those in the ground.





LETTUCE

Lollo Rossa

Sow, sow, sow

Outdoors, March to August
Dig In and sow your seeds thinly into either:

- a pot 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 thin layer of soil or compost and water.

For a continuous supply of lettuce, sow more seeds every fortnight. Easy.

Lurve your lettuce

Lettuce germinates at low temperatures so there's no need to provide any heat. Seedlings should appear in a week to a fortnight.

Once they appear and are big enough to handle, gently pull out the weaker plants, leaving one lettuce every spade-width or so.

Don't forget to keep your plants well watered – particularly during dry spells.

Grub's up

May to October

Don't pull the whole lettuce out in one go! Lollo Rossa is a 'cut and come again' lettuce, so just cut the largest, most tender leaves you want to eat and more will grow back. Perfect.

An irresistible Italian frilly with red-tinged leaves, Lollo Rossa looks great growing on a sunny windowsill.

DIG in DIARY

Keep a record of your grub growing
to help plan next year's crunchy crop

Date sown

TOMATO

LETTUCE

BEETROOT

CARROT

SQUASH

How long did your grub take to grow?
Did you have problems with pests?
If yes, how did you stop them?
Did you cook what you'd grown or eat it raw?
How can you Dig In better next year?!

How's it growing?

Grub's Up.
How's your crop?



Tasty raw, roasted
or in a soup, Beetroot
Boltardy is really
easy to grow on
a sunny windowsill.

BEETROOT

Boltardy

Sow, sow, sow

Outdoors, April to July

Dig In and sow your seeds either:

- a finger-length apart, in a pot filled with multipurpose compost.
- a couple of centimetres apart, in the well-raked soil of a shallow trench just a couple of centimetres deep.

Cover with a thin layer of soil or compost. For a continuous supply of beetroot, sow more seeds every fortnight. Splendid.

Best for beetroot?

Beetroot plants in pots will need regular watering. Plants in the ground only need watering during very dry spells.

Grub's up

June to October

Your beetroot are ready to munch once they reach the size of a golf ball.

Try not to break the thin taproot (the main one!) or the beetroot will bleed. It's also best to twist off the leaves rather than cut them. Rinse off the soil first, but remove the skin after cooking.

Leave a few plants to mature for use over the winter. In November, you can then dig them up and pack them into a box of dry sand or compost for storing in a cool, frost-free place. Or leave them where they are and heap up the soil around them to stop them freezing.

Find out more on what's best for beetroots at bbc.co.uk/digin

CARROT

Early Nantes

Sow, sow, sow

Outdoors, March to July

Dig In and sow your seeds thinly into either:

- a large pot filled with multipurpose compost (this is the best option if you garden on soil that is shallow, heavy or very stony).
- well-dug, well-raked soil in a trench no deeper than your thumbnail.

Cover with a thin layer of soil or compost and water.

For a continuous supply of baby carrots, sow more seeds every fortnight in rows spaced a trowel blade apart or in a separate pot.

If you're growing your carrots in the ground, give the soil a thorough digging over beforehand, but don't add any organic matter. Using the back of a rake, break the soil down to a crumbly texture and then rake.

To grow carrots in a pot, you'll need one that holds at least 10 litres of compost (with plastic pots, the volume is usually printed on the base). Fill the pot with multipurpose compost, water well and allow to drain. Scatter the seed thinly over the surface and cover with a fine layer of compost. Stand in a sunny spot and keep the compost just moist.


Caring for your carrots

Once the seedlings appear, gently pull out the weaker plants, leaving one carrot every couple of centimetres. Water sparingly, but don't let the soil dry out in hot weather.

Grub's up

May to November

Once your carrots are ready for the table – around 12 weeks usually – ease them out of the ground with a fork. Sweet.



From seed to supper in just 12 weeks, nothing's better than growing your own baby carrots. Sweet and crunchy, they'll be far tastier than anything you buy in a supermarket.



Thirsty work?

Butternut squashes are best grown in the ground as they are thirsty plants and can take up quite a bit of room.

To conserve water and keep weeds at bay, try covering the surrounding soil with some old carpet, mulching membrane or black plastic. It won't take long before the plant completely covers it and you might need to curl the stems round if they start going astray.

No jacket required! This butternut squash has been bred with the British climate in mind. Roasted, baked or mashed, Butternut Squash Hunter makes for a tasty autumn treat.

SQUASH

Hunter

Sow, sow, sow

Indoors, May

Dig In and sow each seed into a small pot. Gently push the seed into the moist compost so that it stands vertically rather than lies flat. Place on a warm windowsill and within 7-10 days, big seedlings will appear.

Grow on in a light, frost-free place. Your plants will put on growth very quickly so make sure they don't run short of water.

Four weeks after sowing, your plants will be ready to plant out. Plant each one into either:

- a football-sized hole filled with a mixture of soil and well-rotted manure or compost, roughly a metre from its nearest neighbour.
- a large patio pot or half barrel filled with multipurpose compost

Plant out

June

Before moving plants outdoors, it's best to acclimatise your butternuts

to the weather. Stand them outside during the day and bring them in at night for at least a week. Once there's no danger of frost, settle for a sunny, sheltered spot outside.

Green fruits will start to appear once the plants have started to flower. As the fruits begin to swell, remove some of the leaves to expose them to the sun.

Grub's up

September to October

Strong bushy plants will bear four or more fruits. Frost will kill the foliage overnight so harvest before it gets too cold.

Cut each fruit from the plant with the stalk still intact. Then let your squash ripen on a warm windowsill for a couple of weeks.

Stored in a dry, airy place, the fruits will keep for several months.

Find out more about super-sizing your squash at bbc.co.uk/digin

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