

# Grow Your Own Food This Year

Growing your food is something more people are getting involved in, whether you have a large garden or a small balcony. As we try to slow down our fast-paced lives, the perfect way to do that is by growing your produce. The process is excellent for both your mind and body in many different ways. Learning something new about growing the foods our body needs is a great way to be more aware of the nutrition you require and develop your skills and patience. Studies have shown that gardening and growing fruits, herbs, and vegetables is an excellent activity for reducing stress.

Deciding what you want to grow is an exciting first step. While you may want to jump in at the deep end and start growing everything you can get your hands on, it is worth deciding what you would use and how you would use it. Growing food that you know you will use avoids waste and means you will make the most out of your endeavours. While learning about growing food, it might be a good time to learn how to dehydrate, pickle, and preserve fruits and vegetables to make the most out of your produce.

To ensure your crop will produce at the right time, you must decide early on whether you want to grow from seed or buy an already established plant. One of the joys of growing your food is finding varieties of your favourite foods that you would never encounter in a supermarket. You will be amazed at the vast array of different tomatoes that exist!

Some vegetables are great for first-time growers. Vegetables like radishes, potatoes, and carrots are hardy enough not to need too much protection and care as long as you plant them at the right time of year.

Of course, what you can grow successfully outside depends on the climate of where you live or the set-up of your growing space. Due to the long history of farming, there are so many techniques that you can use that mean you can grow anything you like, anywhere you want, as long as you have the right equipment and knowledge.

## Growing Indoors and Small Outdoor Spaces

There are a few different approaches to growing food in your own house. You can choose to start plants off inside if you have the space for rows of seed trays, utilise your window sills, or look into [hydroponics](#). If you have space in a warm conservatory, you can almost treat it like a greenhouse! Not everyone has that kind of room, though, especially if you live in a smaller space or have a busy family home. To at least get you started, you would be surprised at just how much you can grow on a windowsill, such as herbs, chilis, and sweet peppers.

Hydroponic systems come in all shapes and sizes and can fit into almost any space. The world of hydroponics is an exciting way to grow without soil, and you will learn so much about the

nutrients required to produce your desired plants. You can always combine all different approaches to developing and planting your food.

Even on a small city balcony, you can make room for a mini shelf style greenhouse. The shelves can be of various depths and widths with a plastic cover to keep heat in and keep your plants protected from any adverse weather. For smaller spaces, you can get more creative and use any tools you have available to you. Think about all the room you can save by hanging plants or attaching pots to walls instead of using floor space.

A great idea open to anyone is cutting out a large plastic bottle, connecting it to the wall, placing holes in the bottom for drainage, filling it with soil and then the plant of your choice - upcycling at its finest! You can also paint the bottles for an extra creative flair or to fit in with any colour schemes you already have. If you have a small garden, look into long, thin but deep raised beds to fit the room you have available to you. These are perfect for growing root vegetables without you needing a whole allotment. If you've always dreamed of having homegrown produce, nothing stops you as long as you have the proper use of space, knowledge, and some trial and error as with any new skill.

## **Resources:**

- [Hydroponic Shop - Government of New South Wales](#)
- [LED Grow Lights UK - Harvard University](#)
- [Grow Light - Icon College](#)
- [Grow Kit - JobHop](#)
- [Hydroponics Carbon Filter - University of South Florida](#)