The big grow is back, and this time it’s all about getting you lot growing your own fruit and veg from the comfort of your own kitchen.

We’ve worked with GIY (the experts on growing stuff) to create this foolproof guide to growing your own food. It’s a great way to eat more greens and it’s really easy once you know how.
food for thought

Check these off before you get going.

☐ Think about what you’d like to grow with your family. Write it all down, then check the best time to plant.
☐ Pick a nice sunny spot for your seedlings.
☐ Save recyclable items like innocent smoothie bottles to use as pots.
☐ Get some seeds from your local garden centre or supermarket.

Checked everything off the list? Great – you’re ready to start sowing.

give these a grow

• Try growing sprouting seeds like mustard, chickpeas and fenugreek – guaranteed to liven up the blandest salad.
• Chillies and peppers are great little plants that love heat and light. Perfect for your sunniest windowsill.

• Did you know you can grow pint-sized versions of peas, beans, tomatoes, aubergines and cabbages? These dwarf varieties grow really well indoors and don’t take up much space (unless there happens to be seven of them).
The best thing about growing your own food is that you don’t need a big garden. With a little bit of imagination, you can grow lots of great vegetables on balconies, kitchen shelves, windowsills or even behind the sofa (although we wouldn’t recommend it). Growing in a container also means you don’t have to worry about the soil being rubbish or weeds turning up.

### the golden rules of container growing

1. Container veg needs a little extra TLC, so make sure you give them plenty of food and water.

2. Anything goes when it comes to containers – as long as they’re 15cm deep. You could grow veg in pots, troughs, hanging baskets, window boxes, grow bags, wheelbarrows, old watering cans or tyres.

3. Make sure there are drainage holes in whatever you’re using. If there isn’t, a 1cm layer of small stones should do the trick.

4. Soil from your garden doesn’t do well indoors. Get some potting compost or make up a mixture of potting compost, topsoil and rotted garden compost.

5. On hot days, make sure you water your seedlings twice a day.

---

**growers know…**

That mulch helps keep moisture in and can be made of anything from bark to grass clippings.
top of the crops
Feeling a bit stuck on where to start? The fruit and veg below are the easiest to grow.

Carrots, radishes, spring onions, cucumbers, swiss chard, courgettes, beetroot, chillies, aubergines, strawberries and tomatoes.

Lettuces, radishes, endives, rocket and oriental salads

Cut-and-Come-Again (CCA) varieties of salads coriander and rocket

Herbs, salad leaves, strawberries and tomatoes

Potatoes

5 great things about container growing

- no slugs: they struggle with stairs
- no digging: well, not much anyway . . .
- handy: always there when you need to spruce up a salad
- mobile
- no weeding
fighting food waste

Food waste is a huge problem for our planet. The UK and Ireland waste a whopping 11 billion tonnes of food a year. We can all help reduce this and save a bit of money by making a few changes to how we shop, prepare and store food. The smallest change can make the biggest difference – like using food scraps to grow food.

herbs
1. Most herbs will grow easily from a cutting at a node – the bit where two parts of the plant join together.
2. Put the cutting in a jar of water on a sunny windowsill.
3. Replace the water every two days until roots start to grow.
4. Repot your new plant in a container or outside in the garden.

growing from kitchen scraps
1. Save the white part of your spring onion - the green leaves are just as tasty.
2. Place it root side down in a glass of water on a sunny windowsill.
3. Refresh the water regularly and use the green leaves as they grow.

To make it last longer, repot your new plant in a pot with soil.

growers know...
Spring onions taste great raw in a salad or stir-fried with other veg and noodles.
**garlic**

1. Save forgotten garlic from the back of the fridge.
2. Break into cloves and place them pointy side up in the ground or a container of soil. They should be 4-6 inches apart.
3. Plant them outside in the winter before the first frost. Garlic doesn’t like weeds so watch out for any invaders.
4. It’s ready to harvest when at least half to two-thirds of the leaves on each plant are yellow.

**strawberries**

1. Strawberries are a funny fruit because all of their seeds are on the outside. To grow new strawberry plants, carefully cut the outer skin off the berry or use tweezers to extract a few seeds.
2. Put the berry skin or seeds in your container full of soil and lightly cover with more soil.
3. Pop the container in a sunny spot and water regularly until you spot little sprouts.
4. Repot the sprouts into a container or outside in the garden in spring. You could be tucking into strawberries and cream around June.

**growers know...**

To remove any flowers that pop up on the stems while growing.
5 ways to avoid wasting food

1. eat before you go shopping
It’s not the best idea to go food shopping on an empty stomach. Everything looks tasty and before you know it, you’ve got stuff you don’t need in the trolley. Eat before you do your shopping and you’re more likely to stick to that list.

2. buy loose fruit and veg
There’s less plastic involved and you can just buy what you need. Try your local farmers’ market or a veg box for delicious local produce.

3. store food properly
If you regularly throw away stale crisps, cereal or crackers, try storing them in airtight containers to keep them fresh. Buying a bit less also helps. If you buy things in bulk that can be frozen, put them straight in the freezer to use later.

4. compost
If you live in an area that doesn’t collect food waste, you can still create your own compost (more on that later). This means less food waste in your landfill bin and more food for your seedlings.

5. growing your own food
Growing your own food prevents food waste, saves money and is great fun to do as a family. We recommend starting with lettuces and herbs – two of the most wasted foods that are also the easiest to grow. And you can get creative with leftovers using the tasty recipes on the innocent big grow website www.innocentbiggrow.com.

growers know...
How to grow lettuce from scraps. Just save the stem and pop it in a glass of water on the windowsill. Keep changing the water every few days and watch it sprout.
how to compost

Making your own garden compost is easy and much cheaper than buying bags of the stuff for your plants. By turning leftovers into food for your garden, you’re also helping out the planet by reducing the amount of rubbish that goes to the dump.

make a mini composter

Creating your own compost bin in your kitchen is easy. You don’t need to buy a bin, just make your own from an old innocent smoothie bottle (see instructions below).

1. Take an empty innocent smoothie bottle and remove the labels with warm soapy water.

2. Ask someone to help you cut the top off and keep it handy for later. Punch some holes in the side and bottom of the bottle.

3. Pop it on a small plate. Put some shredded newspaper, leaves and soil from your garden in the bottom of the bottle.

4. Add grass clippings, fruit peelings and vegetable scraps to your composter. Don’t add any dairy or meat.
5. Sprinkle enough water to dampen the contents of your bottle composter.

6. Take the top of the bottle you cut off earlier. Turn it upside down and fit it into the top of the bottle (leave the lid out of it).

7. Add a little water into this opening every day to make your compost rot. Cover the top of your compost with an old tea towel and keep it in a safe place. Keep an eye out for fluffy mould. Ready to use after 6 weeks.

**what can I compost?**
- Cooked and raw foods like, fruit, vegetables or bread.
- Napkins, paper plates, paper food wrapping and paper bags.
- Garden waste like grass cuttings, clippings, twigs or weeds.
- Peelings and unwanted leftovers.
- Teabags, tea leaves, coffee grounds and filters.

**what if I don’t have a garden?**
You can still use your compost on potted plants indoors or pop it in the local compost bin if your area collects it.

**growers know…**
If your compost smells you can tell it’s ready to rot and roll (or use on your plants).
about pollinators

They might buzz, sting and like invading your picnics, but insects like bees are important to our planet. They’re called pollinators, and they help us grow the food we need to be healthy and happy. In fact, they pollinate 71% of the crops that provide our food around the world, so it’s pretty important to have them around.

did you know?

- Pollination happens when pollen (the powder inside a flower) gets moved to another plant so it can make seeds to grow new plants. Without pollination, new plants can’t grow, so it’s pretty important.

- Most pollination happens by accident. Insects drop in on flowers for food, picking up nectar and pollen to eat. What they don’t realise is that each time they visit, they move pollen from one plant to another.

- In the UK and Ireland, our main pollinators are bees, hoverflies, wasps and butterflies. Queen bees are busier than most monarchs – they have to visit around 6,000 flowers a day to get enough to eat.

- A lot of the fruit and veg we eat (like apples, strawberries, tomatoes and cucumbers) need insects to pollinate them.

- Apart from the plants we eat, there are over 2,000 trees and flowers that need pollinating too. A lot of our birds and animals eat the seeds and fruits of these trees.

growers know...

Bees hibernate during the winter months which is why we don’t see them.
how to help out pollinators

1. Be lazy: let the grass grow. A mowed lawn might look nice and tidy, but it’s not the friendliest place for bugs. If we let it grow, wildflowers, dandelion and clover tend to turn up - which is great food for insects.

2. Plant wildflowers and shrubs. Shrubs that flower in the spring (like willow and hazel) are brilliant for hungry bees just coming out of hibernation.

3. Grow fruit and veg in your garden. Plants like courgettes, strawberries and apples provide food for insects in late spring and summer.

4. Don’t use any chemical sprays in your garden. They might kill pesky weeds, but they can have the same effect on bugs.

5. Make a bee-n-bee or bug log cabin. Help out your local pollinators and create a home for them.

build a bug log cabin

1. Find a nice block of wood or a log from the garden.
2. Ask a grown up to help you carefully drill five or six holes in it, as far as the drill will go.
3. Stuff the holes with twigs and garden cuttings. Leave a few holes empty for insects to crawl into.
4. Keep an eye out for your new neighbours. You might see ladybirds, woodlice, ants, centipedes or beetles.
make a bug pod from a plastic bottle

Save a large empty innocent smoothie bottle and cut it in half, then cut the top and bottom halves. You’ll be left with two cylindrical tubes.

Gather twigs, leaves and grass from your garden or local park.

Stuff the tubes with the garden cuttings you’ve collected. Bugs will be able to crawl in from either side.

Tie garden twine around the cylinder and hang one of your bug pods from a tree branch. You can also leave it in the corner of your garden, on a balcony or anywhere else you think there might be insects looking for a place to hang out.
what you’ll need

- 150g grated cooked beetroot
- 150g butter
- 150g dark chocolate drops
- 2 eggs
- 150g sugar
- 90g flour - sieved
- 30g flax seeds (or poppy seeds, pumpkin seeds, crushed nuts - whatever you fancy)
- A cake tin measuring roughly 22cm x 22cm

method

1. Preheat your oven to 160°C/140°C fan/Gas mark 3
2. Melt the chocolate and butter in a plastic mixing bowl over a pot of boiling water (called a bain-marie). Using a microwave? Heat on low power for 30 seconds, then take the bowl out and give it a stir. Place the bowl back in the microwave and repeat the process of cooking for 30 seconds, stopping, stirring and returning to the microwave until the chocolate has melted.
3. Whisk the eggs with the sugar in another mixing bowl for 3 minutes – you don’t want it to go too foamy.
4. Stir the egg mixture into your chocolate and butter mixture.
5. Fold in the sieved flour.
6. Mix in the grated beetroot.
7. Grease your cake tin and pour the brownie mix in.
8. Sprinkle the seeds over the top and bake for 35 minutes.
9. Allow to cool then eat immediately – brownies wait for no one.

growers know…

How to grow beetroot at home. Get some seeds from your local garden centre and give it a grow.
not-so-spooky pumpkin cookies

makes 12 cookies

what you’ll need

- 225g of plain flour
- 30g caster sugar
- 30g dark brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 pinch of ground cinnamon
- 150g diced cold butter
- 5 pinches of flax seeds
- 100g grated pumpkin
- 1 tablespoon honey
- Chocolate drops and pumpkin seeds for decoration
- Two baking trays
- Baking paper
- Rolling pin
- Cookie cutters

method

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C/150°C fan/Gas mark 3.
2. Line your baking trays with baking paper.
3. In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and cinnamon.
4. Using clean fingers, work the butter into the mixture.
5. Keep mixing for a few minutes then add the seeds, honey and grated pumpkin.
6. Roll out the cookie dough between two pieces of baking paper to about half a centimetre thick.
7. Use your cookie cutters to cut out shapes and decorate with chocolate drops and pumpkin seeds.
8. Place on the baking trays and bake for 16 minutes.
9. Allow to cool, then enjoy with a glass of innocent dairy free. Dipping is encouraged.

growers know…

How to grow pumpkins at home from pumpkin seeds. Just clean off the pulp, allow to dry, then plant the seeds 2.5cm deep. Wait until you see a sprout before repotting in the garden or a large container.
the best carrot & coriander burgers

makes four burgers

what you’ll need

- 400g grated carrot
- 75g plain flour plus a little more for coating
- sea salt
- 50ml rapeseed oil plus a little more for frying
- Half a teaspoon of coriander seeds
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- A pinch of chopped chillies
- 50g flax seeds to coat the burgers

method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Peel and grate carrots into a large mixing bowl using the coarse side of a grater.
3. Add the sea salt and massage for a few minutes until you feel the grated carrot soften.
4. Toast the coriander seeds for 2 minutes in a frying pan on a medium heat.
5. Add the oil, finely chopped garlic and chopped chillies and let them infuse for 2 minutes.
6. Add the spiced seeds to the carrots and mix well.
7. Add the gluten-free flour and mix again.
8. Shape mixture into generous size burgers.
9. Mix the flax seeds with 2 tablespoons of gluten-free flour on a plate.
10. Coat the burgers on each side with the flax seeds and flour mix.
11. Add a little rapeseed oil to a large frying pan a medium heat and fry off the burgers for 2 to 3 minutes on each side.
12. Once fried, finish off in the oven for 10 minutes.
13. Serve in a bun or on their own.

growers know…

How to grow garlic at home. Check page 5.
the quick and easy flatbread pizza

makes four pizzas

what you’ll need

For the flatbread
• 300g natural yoghurt
• 300g self-raising flour plus extra for dusting
• A pinch of salt

For the topping
• 1/4 of a tin of chopped tomatoes
• 3 basil, sliced
• A pinch of salt
• Half a teaspoon of chopped garlic
• 75g grated cheddar
• Your favourite toppings – we like diced peppers, broccoli and mushrooms.

• A rolling pin
• Baking trays

method

1. Mix together the yoghurt, flour, baking power and salt in a bowl until it forms a smooth dough.
2. Transfer the dough to a floured surface and divide into four equal parts.
3. Roll out each piece of dough to about 20 cm in diameter, using plenty of flour to prevent sticking or tearing.
4. Place each flatbread on a baking tray and set aside.
5. In a small mixing bowl, mix the chopped tomatoes with the salt, chopped garlic and sliced basil leaves.
6. Spread the tomato sauce evenly over the flatbreads, add your chosen toppings and cover with grated cheese.
7. Bake at 180˚C for 10 to 15 minutes.
8. Let it cool slightly before tucking in.

growers know…

How to grow garlic and basil at home. Check page 5.
# Growing calendar

Use this handy calendar to know which veg to grow when.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>sow/plant outside</th>
<th>transplant</th>
<th>sow indoors</th>
<th>harvest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>basil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beetroot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broad bean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>courgette</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garlic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lettuce know how you're getting on, tag us on @innocent (UK) or @innocentireland (ROI) on social media.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>key</th>
<th>sow/plant outside</th>
<th>transplant</th>
<th>sow indoors</th>
<th>harvest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lettuce loose leaf</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli Sprouting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lettuce know how you’re getting on, tag us on @innocent (UK) or @innocentireland (ROI) on social media.