



THE YEAR-ROUND POTAGER

KITCHEN GARDEN IN CONTAINERS



Discover how to grow a variety of crops for use in recipes with GYO's step-by-step advice

If you want to grow an assortment of fruit and veg but don't have the space in the garden to create a vegetable patch, then why not consider a kitchen garden in containers? You can choose many types of veg to grow in pots that are the right size and have an appealing appearance for your outside space. Try tomatoes, peppers, salads and more with this step-by-step guide to creating an easy access array of ingredients for delicious recipes.

1 There are many veg crops that are suited to growing in containers. Varieties of tomatoes and peppers are popular choices as they are easy to care for. Considering container width and depth is also important, so that plants have room to grow.

2 Plant a pot of herbs and tomatoes in good quality compost. Put marigolds in the container, too, as these plants will help repel whitefly, meaning your tomato crops will not become infested with this pest. This is referred to as companion planting.



3 Herbs, such as parsley, can be grown in pots. Sow seeds from March until June but remember to water this crop. Flowerheads can be taken off to channel energy into foliage growth and the stems can be cut near the base when ready for harvesting.

4 Various tomatoes can be grown in pots, but it is important to care for them – make sure the soil is moist but not dry or waterlogged. Also be aware of tomato blight, so keep an eye out for brown leaves that are wilting. Pick toms when they are fully coloured.



GAP Photos/Nicola Stocken

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You can also grow a kitchen garden in a hanging basket. Choose a sunny spot to site the basket and choose crops suited to this type of container, such as 'Tumbler' tomatoes which have the perfect growth habit for this, as well as herbs and peppers.

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Growing salads in containers can maximise space. Choose types such as rocket, spinach, mizuna and corn salad to fill pots with leafy pickings. They should be thinned when growing to create more space for development, but remember that these thinnings can be eaten.

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To harvest salad cut the leaves near the base with a pair of scissors. For example, rocket is ready to pick around four weeks after sowing – leaves are best enjoyed young for the delicious peppery flavour. Take foliage from several plants at once instead of just one.

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Chillies make great container crops and they produce delicious yields. As specimens develop they will need to be staked with a small support to stop the plant drooping with the weight of the yields – do this once specimens reach a height of around 20cm.

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Harvest the yields once they are the desired colour and maturity. If left on the plant the flavour will change as the heat intensity increases. For a greater number of yields pick them regularly, or leave individual ones to mature although harvests may be less.

10



Mature yields are best for drying. Use a needle and thread to create a small hole in the chillies, then push the needle through. Do this until you have a collection of the chillies together and put them in a place with good air circulation and sunlight.

GYO'S TOP TIPS



GROW FRUIT

Along with cultivating an array of vegetables in containers you can also grow fruit, such as strawberries, raspberries and blueberries, as part of your kitchen garden. Strawberries are hugely popular yields which grow well in containers or hanging baskets. Plants can supply juicy, flavoursome produce from June to September, so it is important to care for specimens throughout their growth so that they will provide abundant and delicious yields. Make sure crops get enough water and that you use the correct technique (watering from the base not the top). Once you see precious yields developing on the plant, you can help prevent rotting by putting straw underneath the fruits to keep them from touching the earth. Berries should be harvested when they are fully-coloured to bright red and eat them fresh to enjoy the delicious flavour.

Grey mould

If growing fruit in containers outside, you need to be aware of pests and diseases that could affect the plant and crop. Weaker plants are more susceptible to the problem grey mould, which becomes apparent as the fluffy grey coloured mould appears. Plants with open wounds, such as where they have been damaged, are more vulnerable as this is where the mould can infect the plant. To try and reduce this problem don't crowd plants together, and take away any affected foliage as soon as possible.

