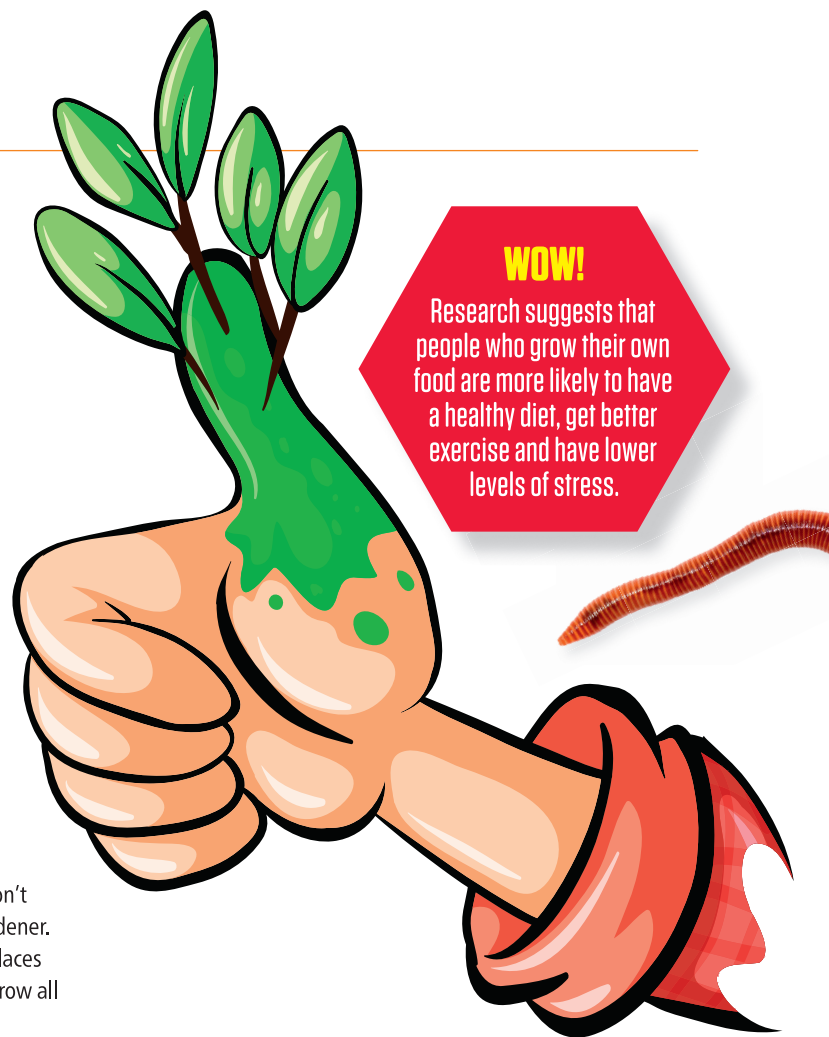




Things to make and do



Gloriously grubby green fingers



WOW!

Research suggests that people who grow their own food are more likely to have a healthy diet, get better exercise and have lower levels of stress.

Why not veg out this summer? Growing your own fresh food is delicious and good for your health, too.

Getting messy with soil, watching seeds turn into sprouting plants and picking mouth-watering fruit and vegetables – what's not to like? It's also a great excuse to get out in the sunshine this summer. However, if you

don't have a garden, don't worry; you don't need to have a garden to be a great gardener. Windowsills, window boxes and other places around your home are perfect spots to grow all sorts of plants.

Make do and reuse

Go green with planters recycled from everyday items.



Boxing clever

Take an empty egg carton and fill each hollow with soil. Then put a few seeds into each cup. Water and watch your plants grow over the next few weeks. When the plants become too big, you can plant the lot – carton and all – straight into a flowerpot or a patch in your garden.

Punnet fun

Plastic fruit containers are perfect for planting herbs. The holes in the bottom allow water to escape so plants don't drown. Just fill the container with soil, plant your seeds and water regularly.



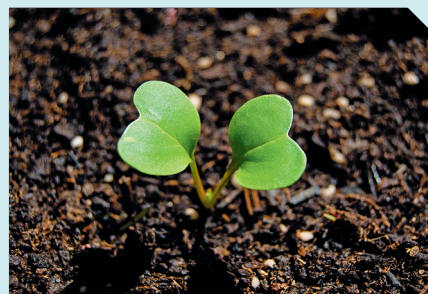
Lovely leftovers

Who needs seeds? Reduce waste by growing plants from kitchen scraps. Chop off the bottom of a lettuce and put it in a bowl with about a centimetre of water. Keep it in a sunny area and change the water every day. As soon as it starts to sprout, transfer it to a flower pot with soil or plant it out. This method also works with carrot tops, garlic, herb stalks and onions.



The basics

There are just a few things every plant needs to grow up big and strong.



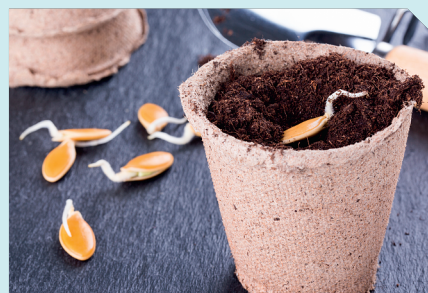
Soil

Healthy soil is the basis of all healthy plants. Organic soil contains humus – a mixture of compost and decaying leaves and grass. Soil also needs to be loose and fluffy, allowing plant roots plenty of air.



Water

Plants need water to create their sugary food. You should generally give plants a good glug of water about once a week. You can check the state of the soil by sticking your finger in it to see if it is moist.



Seeds

Different plant seeds have different shapes and sizes. This determines how far down you plant a seed. As a rough guide, you should plant any seed at a depth of two times its width.

Six crops for late summer

There are some vegetables that thrive when you plant them later in the year. Here are six to start you off:

OUT OF THIN AIR

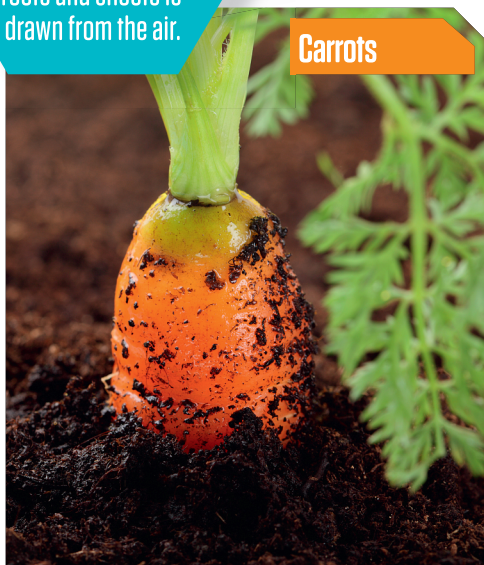
Most of the material that plants use to build their roots and shoots is drawn from the air.

Soil scientists

Worms are nature's soil scientists. They may feel unpleasant, but they are incredibly important for your garden. These wiggly wonders increase the amount of air and water that gets into the soil. They also gobble up decaying roots and leaves and turn them into nutrients that plants can use. Having worms in your soil means that you've got a healthy garden.



Carrots



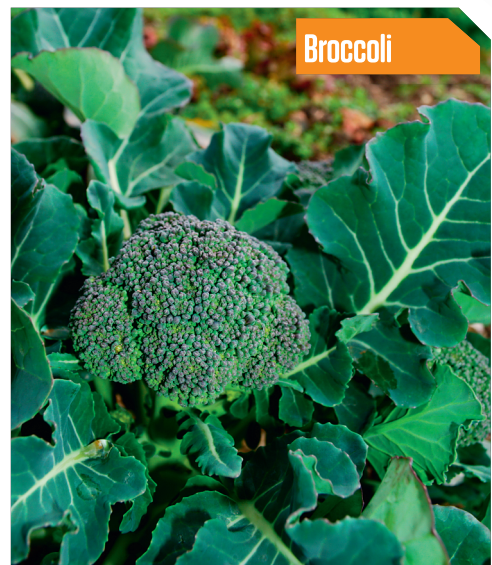
1 The perfect time to plant carrots is between July and August. They take around 12 weeks to grow fully and will need frequent watering. The best time to water carrots is early in the morning so that excess water can evaporate during the day.

Cauliflower



2 Cauliflower is a delicious vegetable to eat in the winter months, either cooked or raw. Plant it in late summer. It takes between eight and 10 weeks to grow and will be ready when the weather turns cooler.

Broccoli



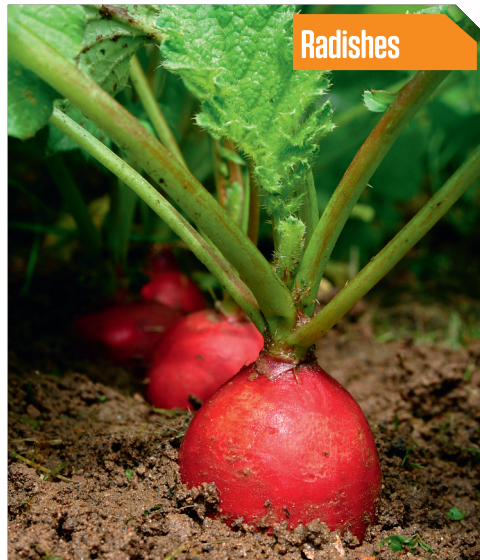
3 Broccoli thrives in cold weather, so you have nothing to worry about if you are a little late getting it in the ground. Plant it in mid to late August and it will take around eight weeks to grow. Make sure the soil is moist on sunny days.

Spinach



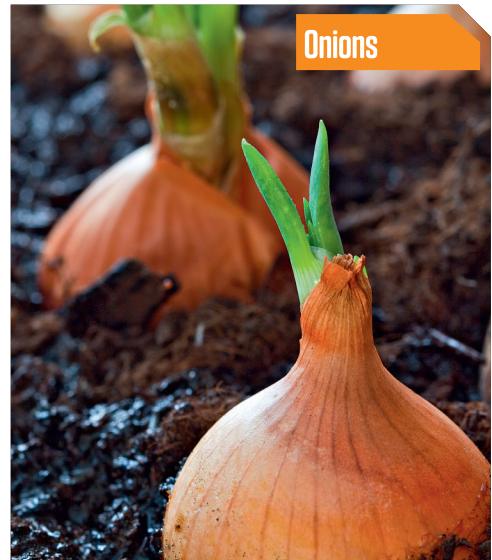
4 Spinach makes a delicious alternative to lettuce in salads or wilted as a side dish. Plant spinach seeds in late August. It takes around six weeks before you can pick the leaves.

Radishes



5 Winter radishes grow larger than summer radishes, and are usually crisper with a stronger flavour. Plant them in mid-summer and harvest them in around two to four months.

Onions



6 Onions are easy to grow and they are very hardy too, which makes them perfect for later in the year. Plant out in late August and they will be ready to harvest after 20–30 days.