

# Gardening Ideas



Having a vegetable garden is not just for the adults in the family. Having fun outside in the dirt is a great way for children to start helping grow vegetables. As your child is still little start small, let them help pick out what to grow – look at pictures together or visit your local nursery. Let them help dig the soil or put the dirt into a pot. Help them make a sign and draw a picture of the vegetable they are growing so everyone can see

it.

Let them help water their pot or patch of dirt. You don't have to have lots of ground to have a vegetable patch. If you live in an apartment or have a little backyard you can use all sorts of different containers to grow vegetables in.

## Easy fruit and vegetables to grow and eat

Season	What to Plant
Autumn	Beans in frost-free areas, Lettuce, Carrots Tomatoes in frost-free areas
Winter	Beans in frost-free areas Tomatoes in frost-free areas Carrots
Spring	Sweetcorn, Parsley, Cucumber, Beans, Tomatoes, Rockmelon, Lettuce & Carrots
Winter	Sweetcorn, Parsley, Cucumber, Beans, Tomatoes Rockmelon, Lettuce & Carrots

## Cherry tomatoes

Many children love to eat these straight from the bush and they are less resistant to disease than other varieties. Don't use stakes two years in a row or you may get a root disease.

## Silverbeet

This is so easy to grow and useful for cheese and spinach triangles.

## Lettuce

Easy to grow in autumn and spring before the hot weather makes it change to seed.

## Pumpkins

Save some seeds and plant them in a rich compost mix. Butternut is one of the sweetest and easiest to cut.

## Cucumbers

They are easy to grow and you will get lots and lots of them. Pick them when they are small because they can become bitter if you leave them for too long. Water around the roots rather than the leaves to stop mildew and plant the seed in a small mound of rich soil.

## Sweet corn

This needs to be planted in summer or late spring. Sow seeds direct into a hole filled with compost. Heap up the soil as the plant gets big.

## Sweet potatoes

These are easy to grow all year round, simply plant on old one and watch it take over.

## Potatoes

Cut old potatoes into parts each with an eye and plant deep in the garden or in a deep pot with added compost and top with straw. Keep the soil or straw up around the roots in a little hill. If you don't get frost, plant in April. New potatoes are delicious.

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## Peas

These need to be planted in autumn and come in dwarf style, climbing or snow peas (all need something to cling to).

## Strawberries

You can buy runners from a nursery or you could plant them in a strawberry pot. They need lots of water and should fruit from April until November.

## Passionfruit

Plant a grafted variety against a strong fence or lattice. In 12 months you should have passionfruit ready to eat.

## Rockmelons

They grow like cucumbers from a vine on the ground and you plant them in spring.

## Citrus trees

Oranges and mandarins can be eaten fresh off the trees. You can even get smaller varieties that you can grow in pots and ones that can have both oranges and lemons. Citrus trees need to be planted a sunny sheltered spot with lime and plenty of compost.

## Seeds

Seeds are best raised in seedling trays in seed raising mix. It is a good idea to transplant then into a milk carton when they are a few weeks old. Transplant the seedlings into the garden or pot when they are 12cm high and very strong. Large seeds such as sweet corn or beans can be planted straight in the milk carton pots.

## Milk carton pots

They are made by saving milk cartons that have been washed. Each one has the top and bottom cut off them and then cut in half, giving two pots without bottoms. They are placed in foam boxes (with holes in the bottom for drainage). The bottom half of the pot is filled with rich compost and the top with the seedling raising mix. The seedlings can be left in the box in a

sheltered space until they are strong. When transplanting, simply dig a hole in the garden or in a large pot and slide the seedlings into the soil.

## Fun and easy to grow and great to eat

### Mung Beans

1. Soak 2 tablespoons of seeds (mung beans, alfalfa seeds, lentils) in water overnight in a large jar. Rinse.
2. Cover the opening of the jar with a clear nylon stocking & place a rubber band around it.
3. Rinse the seed well with water each morning and afternoon for 2-5 days.
4. Sprouts are ready to eat when the sprout is twice as long as the original seed.
5. Cover the lid of the jar and place in the fridge. They will keep for several days.

### Hairy Heads

1. Cut squares from mosquito netting or old stockings and tie off with an elastic band.
2. Empty alfalfa or other small edible sprouting seeds into pouches and layer cotton wool then fill with saw dust. Tie off open end with a rubber band.
3. Decorate hairy heads and give some character. Sit head on a small cup or old yoghurt containers and place in a sunny position. Water and watch them grow.
4. Eggshells can be used instead of netting. After eating a hard boiled egg, carefully clean out the inside of the shell and fill with soil or compost.
5. Plant the seeds and cover lightly with more soil. Clean the outside then draw a face. Water daily and watch them grow.

