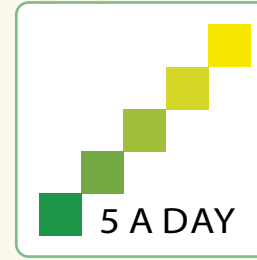


5 A DAY • Fruit on the Plate



• Growing Fruit and Vegetables • Food

Growing Fruit and Vegetables



NORTH WEST FOOD & HEALTH
TASK FORCE



INVESTING IN
englandsnorthwest



Connecting **Farming** and **Food** in England's Northwest

How do I get started?

Why grow fruit and vegetables?

Many people will be unaware of how food is grown or what it looks like in an unprocessed state. Growing food helps people become more engaged with the food chain – where food comes from, how it is grown – as well as developing practical skills, team working and respect for their environment. It is a creative activity that gets people outside, involved in physical activity as well as enjoying eating the produce they have grown.

Involving children in growing schemes encourages them to try a larger range of fruit and vegetables. Growing projects can also be a great way to get people involved with the local community and develop partnerships with other groups and organisations.

Growing fruit and vegetables gives people an opportunity:

- to learn about plants and growing vegetables in a practical way
- to increase access to fruits and vegetables
- to improve their understanding of the food chain and the seasonality of our food
- to give children an experience of a garden and develop pride and a sense of their environment
- for a community to work and have fun together to improve an open space – allotment/school garden
- to increase physical activity
- enrich the school curriculum with practical demonstration of science

How do I get started?

Small scale

A growing project can start with pots on a window sill or in larger pots outside or in small raised beds or herb gardens.

Larger scale

Raised beds, cloches or greenhouse or an ambitious allotment development

When planning a growing scheme you will need to consider:

- who will co-ordinate or manage it
- what are the costs and how will it be funded
- what space will you need for your group
- how will you secure the area and create appropriate access
- who will do the work and how many people are there to help
- what training might be required
- what are the safety issues that need to be considered to keep everyone safe
- how are you going to prepare and fertilise your land
- how are you going to divide the space up and what types of crops are you going to grow
- how are you going to prevent pests
- how will you harvest and share your crops.

Where do I go for help ?

Set up a steering group

The steering group needs to be a group of enthusiastic people who have the time to support the project. The group will bring different skills and experience that will help the overall success of the project. The steering group should work together with the local community to find out what people want from the project and develop an action plan to implement the project. The group should also work together to monitor and evaluate the success of the project.

The steering group will need to be accountable for any funding and so will need a formal constitution and accountability process.

It is useful to have the following expertise on your steering group:

- community development skills to actively involve the local community
- local council contract services
- allotment services/federation member
- finance + bid writing
- evaluation skills
- horticultural/ food growing experience (possibly with organic growing knowledge – if growing with children you may want to avoid the use of chemicals)
- practical skills for construction work if necessary

Where do I go for help ?

To successfully coordinate a community growing scheme you will need some funds to start your project. Appendix 1 lists organisations that may be able to help with advice and securing funds for community growing schemes.

Local authority /Primary Care Trust:

There may be someone in the local authority or Primary Care Trust with specific responsibility for promoting allotments, recycling, environmental/ food and health projects who may be able to help.

Local allotment societies and allotment federations.

A list of allotment sites will be available from the property services at your local authority offices. Local authorities usually own the land but the management of allotment sites is usually devolved to the individual allotment associations. To rent an allotment you will need to contact the secretary of the relevant allotment association who will be able to advise on applying for a site and the conditions of tenancy. Statutory allotments are parcels of land acquired or appropriated by the local authority specifically for use as allotments. These sites cannot be sold or used for other purposes without the consent of the Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions.



What crops should I start with?

How do I manage the plot?

Temporary allotments are on land which is allocated for other uses but leased or rented by an allotments authority. Temporary allotments are not protected from disposal in the same way that statutory allotments are.

Accredited training organisations

e.g adult learning colleges, charitable training organisations
These organisations may be able to provide volunteers or training expertise to support volunteers and could be a source of funding or 'in kind' help.

Other sources of information are listed in appendix 1:

What will a growing project cost to run?

The costs will obviously depend on the size of your project. Appendix 2 outlines the costs of a project in the North West (Bolton) and can be used as a guide. These costs do not include any costs to improve access or security of a site. Insurance costs and/or membership of other organisations need to be included. A list of useful equipment is also included.

What crops should I start with?

Growing your own food is an empowering experience – early successes leads to a great boost of confidence. Limit the first year to growing mainly 'problem free' crops such as onions, beans, peas, potatoes and tomatoes rather than brassicas that can be more unpredictable.

The planting should be based on a plan of the plot and should be centred around a crop rotation of at least four years if possible. Once the group have decided on the crops people want to grow they can be organised into plant families and incorporated into a rotation in the plan.

There are lots of places to source seeds and plants for your growing project. You may want to consider growing more unusual varieties and help to conserve those traditional varieties that are becoming lost due to seed companies not wanting the expense of registering them. The Heritage Seed Library is managed by Henry Doubleday Research Association and aims to conserve and make available vegetable varieties that are not widely available and arrange seed swaps between members.

Contact for details (See Appendix 1)

What equipment will I need?

A list of useful equipment is included in appendix 3. Specialist small size equipment will be needed if the project involves children. Remember to also include equipment to support any volunteer groups you may have involved in the scheme e.g first aid kits, gardening gloves, kettle + crockery for refreshments etc.

How do I manage the plot?

There will need to be people throughout the year prepared to work on a plot on a regular basis and tasks must be well organised. Workloads change throughout the year – winter can be a quiet time (though good for construction projects) and summer can be very hectic.

Unfortunately the heavy demands of summer when crops may need regular watering coincide with holiday times – this needs to be considered with careful planning of the type and timing of crops.

Harvesting from summer onwards is an enjoyable job but needs organising well so that everyone who has been involved through the year benefits. School projects take note – many crops are harvested during the summer holidays so unless you plan properly children may work for months on a project but do not see or taste the products of their labour



How do I find volunteers to help?

Publicise the project in local free papers or put posters and leaflets in community centres. The local volunteer bureau and allotment societies may be able to help. There may be opportunities to link the project to other programmes in your area e.g Youth Offending Team, Princes Trust, learning disability or adult learning teams.

What health and safety issues need to be considered?

The health and safety of everyone involved with a gardening project is very important and steps need to be taken to make sure any risks are kept to a minimum. You can get more information on risk assessment from the Health and Safety Executive.

Health and Safety Executive

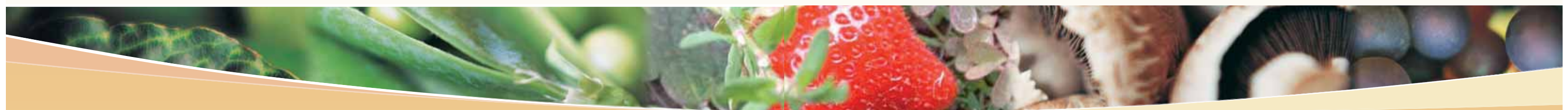
Contact HSE Infoline 0845 345 0055

hseinformationservices@natbrit.com

www.hse.gov.uk

You must make sure your group is insured to carry out a growing activity, that you have completed a risk assessment for the activity and that you have sufficient adult supervision. BTCV (See information below) have an insurance scheme available to members of their community association.

It is very important that any equipment such as tools, plastic bags, plant pots etc. are being used correctly to prevent accidents. Every member of the group should be shown how to use equipment prior to the activity and closely supervised throughout. If you have any doubts about the safety of your group stop the activity until you are sure it is safe to continue.



How do I know my land is safe?

Evaluation

Hand Washing

It is very important that every member of the group washes their hands after taking part in any growing activity to minimise risks. If possible, gloves should be worn for all activities. Contact your local environmental health department for further information.

What about contamination – how do I know my land is safe to use for growing?

Since 2000 Local authorities in England have had a duty to identify potentially contaminated land in their areas. (contact either the Environmental Health or the Planning Department) for advice and help on possible land contamination.

Useful information:

Growing Food – how safe is your land?
How to assess and deal with potential land contamination. Guidance for communities and individuals involved in food growing.
Booklet produced by the North West Food and Health Task Force
Contact: atowers@uclan.ac.uk

It will be useful to test the soil for fertility and to complete some sample digs on the site to check if the soil is deep enough, if there are large amounts of stones and rubble to remove and if there is adequate drainage.



Evaluation

Evaluation is important to be able to show your funders that you have achieved the targets set out in the bid. Creating a baseline is important as well as having an evaluation plan for the whole of the project set out at the beginning of the project (see Evaluating Food Projects in this set of guides). Evaluation could include:

- numbers of people involved (+ where they live – if the project is targeted at defined areas)
- number of volunteers trained in basic growing skills
- increase in knowledge of the food chain
- reported changes in eating behaviour – increase in number of portions of fruit and vegetables eaten/day.
- photographic/video diary of progress
- personal case studies

Acknowledgments:

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Further information from ;

Alison Nelson 5 A DAY Regional Co-ordinator
Tel: 0161 952 4152
alison.nelson@btinternet.com

Sylvia Cheater 5 A DAY Regional Co-ordinator
Tel: 0161 9524152
sylvia.cheater@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Useful sources of further information:

BTCV – inspiring people, improving places
BTCV is the UK's leading charity creating better environments where people feel valued, included and involved.

Contact : Tel: 01302 572 244
www.btcv.org.uk

BTCV Community Association

The association is open to all groups and organisations wanting to work for a better environment.

Annual membership (currently £30 per year) provides useful information to get a growing scheme started including a guide to funding sources. BTCV can also provide training, a public liability and Personal Accident Insurance Scheme.
Contact: local-groups@btcv.org.uk

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens support community growing projects providing technical advice and networking opportunities. They have a wide range of materials available including an excellent guide called the Community Garden Starter Pack.

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens
Contact 0117 923 1800
admin@farmgarden.org.uk
www.farmgarden.org.uk



Useful Sources of information

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside works to protect the regions wildlife and to create green spaces in towns and promote sustainable lifestyles.

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside

Contact 01772 324129
lancswt@cix.co.uk

www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/lancashire

Groundwork Northwest

Groundwork is a leading environmental regeneration charity making sustainable development a reality in many of the UK's poorest communities.

Groundwork Northwest Regional office

Contact 0161 237 3200

<http://www.groundwork.org.uk/north-west/>

Scottish Community Diet Project

The Scottish Community Diet Project's aims is to help improve Scotland's diet and health by supporting work within low-income communities which improves access to and take-up of a healthy diet through community initiatives and inter-agency partnership working. The project has produced some excellent guidance literature on developing growing schemes and funding community food projects.

Scottish Community Diet Project

Contact 0141 226 5261

www.dietproject.org.uk

info@scotsconsumer.org.uk

Garden Organic (HDRA)

Garden Organic is the working name of the Henry Doubleday Research Association (HDRA). Dedicated to researching and promoting organic gardening, farming and food.

HDRA

Contact: 024 7630 3517

Web site: www.hdra.org.uk

E-mail: enquiry@hdra.org.uk

Organic growing groups in the NW

Offshoots Permaculture Project
Towneley Hall, Burnley, BB11 3RQ
Tel: 01282 454826

Bolton Gathering of Organic Growers (GOG)

Tel c/o 01204-907714 (day) email c/o
alan.brown@bolton.nhs.uk

Community Composting Network

The Community Composting Network supports and promotes the community management and use of waste bio-degradable resources . It is a member's organisation, self-managed by an elected committee of members.

Community Composting Network

Contact: 0114 2580483 or 0114 2553720

Web site: <http://www.communitycompost.org/>

E-mail: info@communitycompost.org

The Permaculture Association

The Permaculture Association supports people and projects through training, networking and research, using the ethics and principles of permaculture.

Contact 0845 4581805

www.permaculture.org.uk/

Equipment and Costs

Appendix 2:

Examples of Items & Costings for a growing project (less than 1/4 acre) 2006 prices.

Polytunnel & Accessories

Polytunnel	£345.45
Propane Heater	£119.00
Greenhouse Staging £95 x 2	£190.00
Harrod Horticultural Padlock	£19.96
TOTAL	£674.31

Rent

Additional Rent 1 yr.	£29.82
TOTAL	£29.82

Growing areas & Compost

Raised Beds £75 ea x 12	£900.00
(incl. 30 ton topsoil £98 per 5 tonne delivery - £588	
38 foot of 2" x 9" reclaimed wood 326 x 12 - £321)	
Potting compost £8.25 x 10	£82.50
Compost Bins	£139.00
TOTAL	£1121.50

Weed & Pest Control

Polythene Sheeting	£40.54
Phormisol weed suppressant	£86.37
Enviromesh pest control	£120.25
TOTAL	£247.16

Tools & Storage

Watering Cans £23.45 x 2	£46.90
Water Butt Kit	£53.45
Secateurs £13.75 x2	£27.50
Petrol Brush Cutter (DB26)	£199.69
Blade for above	£5.99
Vented Stacking Trays £8.52 x 4	£34.10
Potato Sacks	£5.98
TOTAL	£365.71

Seeds & Plants

Various (see organic gardening catalogue)	£150.00
TOTAL	£150.00

Volunteers

First aid Kit	£30.08
Waterproofs XL £6.35 x 5 =	31.75
Cooker	£19.99
Kettle	£9.99
Cups 6x3	£15.00
Refreshments £3.00 x 20 weeks	£60.00
Volunteers Expenses	£120.00
Publicity & stationary	£60.00
TOTAL	£326.81

Sundries

Sundries. Gas, Petrol, Oil, Nails, Screws etc.	£60.00
TOTAL	£60.00

TOTAL GRANT REQUESTED

£2995.31



School Growing Projects

School Growing Projects

Appendix 3:

Suggested gardening equipment needed and costs at 2005 prices:

Bow Saw	£9.99
Garden Knife	£9.99
Garden Bag	£12.99
Multishear	£19.99
Pruning Saw	£12.99
Single handed shear	£15.99
Edging Tool	£21.99
Hand Fork	£9.99
Hand Trowel	£9.99
Leaf Rake	£11.99
Garden Rake	£25.99
Garden Fork	£21.99
Garden Spade	£21.99
Garden Hoe	£21.99
Garden Cultivator	£21.99
Digital Wireless thermometer	£24.95
Soil PH Meter	£13.99
Water Butt	£21.99
Wormery	£31.45
Net tunnel	£17.99
Propagator	£95.99
Rent	
Gloves	
Waterproofs	
Boots	

(prices from www.greengardenshop.co.uk)

Appendix 4:

School Growing Projects

There are a number of organisations who can offer support, advice and resources for developing school garden projects:

Food in Schools:

The Food in Schools Programme is a joint venture between the Department of Health (DH) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). A toolkit is available to support a whole range of nutrition-related activities and projects in schools including growing projects

Contact: www.foodinschools.org

Growing Schools

Growing Schools is a DFES initiative to encourage schools to develop and use the outdoor classroom as a valuable teaching resource. The initiative has lots of really useful information about anything and everything from curriculum links and lesson plans, to health and safety.

Contact: www.teachernet.gov.uk/growingschools

Lancashire County Council – School Grounds Development

An excellent step-by-step support pack for schools wanting to develop their grounds including developing ideas, planning your project, assessing the land and promoting and evaluating the project. This resource is available to download free from the internet.

Contact: www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/schoolgrounds/index.asp



Eco Schools

Eco Schools is a European project promoting environmental awareness throughout the curriculum and helping schools manage their buildings and grounds in a more environmentally friendly manner.

Contact: www.eco-schools.org

National Healthy Schools Programme

The National Healthy Schools Programme requires schools to meet criteria in four core themes, one of which is healthy eating.

Contact: www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/

Learning Through Landscapes

Learning Through Landscapes helps schools across the UK to bring lasting improvements to the environmental quality and educational use of their grounds.

Contact: www.ltl.org.uk



5 A DAY • Fruit on Desk
• Growing Fruit and
Vegetables • Food
Co-operatives • Mobile
Fruit & Vegetable Vans
• Community Cook &
Eat Training • Evaluation



Connecting **Farming** and **Food** in England's Northwest