



Type of Guide: Fruit & veg



## Growing Fruit & Veg in Containers

If you only have a small garden or even just a patio, you can easily grow your own tasty fruit and vegetables. Nearly all fruit and veg can be grown in pots and other containers. In fact, some vegetables crop even better when grown well in containers!



## Choosing A Pot, Container Or Planter

Now that patios are so popular, there's no reason why you can't grow your own. Growing on the patio is also really convenient - your vegetables and fruit will be just outside the back door and easy to pick just as and when you need them.

Any container will be suitable as long as it is big enough for the crop you want to grow, has sufficient drainage and you use a [good compost](#). Terracotta containers look good, but they do dry out quicker than plastic ones, so plants need more watering than when grown in plastic or metal containers.

Although you can grow lettuces, salad leaves and quick-maturing salads in shallow window boxes, usually the bigger the container the better. It will provide a good cool root run and need watering less frequently. For instance,

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French beans are better in 15-20cm (6-8in) pots; carrots, parsnips, beetroot and other root vegetables need a pot that is deep enough for their roots – or you could grow round or stump-rooted varieties.

Fruiting vegetables, such as tomatoes, aubergines, peppers and cucumbers, do really well in containers, as the slightly restricted root run helps encourage better flowering and heavier cropping.

The following pot sizes work best for these popular vegetables.

**Peppers** 20-23cm (8-9in) pots

**Aubergines** 23-25cm (9-10in) pots

**Tomatoes** 25-30cm (10-12in) pots

**Cucumbers** 30cm (12in) pots.

You can also grow in [gro-bags](#) - but be aware once the crops are reaching maturity, they will need very frequent watering. Giant planters are deeper, contain more compost, and so don't dry out so quickly.

### Best Compost For Vegetables



As the majority of vegetables are annuals and will only be growing for a few months, any [multi-purpose compost](#) will produce fabulous crops. Any that are specially formulated for fruit and vegetables will be even better.

Potatoes may grow better in an [ericaceous compost](#). That's because the tubers are more susceptible to a disfiguring skin disease called potato scab when they are grown in a neutral or alkaline medium.

### Best Compost For Fruit

As fruit trees and bushes are more-or-less permanent crops, they do better in a loam-based [John Innes No3 compost](#). These composts are also heavier and firmly anchor the pot in place and are especially good for tall growing crops, where the pot may get blown over in windy weather.

### Top Tips For Growing Fruit & Veg In Containers



- In order to have a successful and productive edible container garden, it is very important that you care for your plants. For instance, they will depend on you for water and [feed](#).
- Always aim to keep the compost as evenly moist as possible - without allowing it to dry out nor become waterlogged. Regular watering is usually the best way.
- Good [potting composts](#) contain enough nutrients to feed the plants for several weeks; check the bag to see how long the compost should feed for. After that time, your plants should be fed with a [plant food](#) to keep them growing strongly and cropping prolifically. A general purpose [liquid plant food](#) is perfect for all leafy and rooting crops, whereas a [high potash feed](#) is needed for all flowering and fruiting crops.
- Again, feeds specifically recommended for fruit and veg are a great choice as they may contain nutrients that help promote great flavours.