

THE VEG BOX



GROWING THE FUTURE
TYFU'R DYFODOL

GARDENING ACTIVITIES TO DO OUTSIDE USING EQUIPMENT FOUND AROUND THE HOUSE

Curriculum links: Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Mathematical Development, Creative Development, Physical Development, Science, Healthy Schools, Eco Schools, Recycling, ESDGC.

Age range: From Early Years to Key Stage 2.

Outcomes: To encourage children to use horticultural skills to grow plants using a variety of different containers, to promote imagination and healthy eating.

Key words to learn: Peat-free Compost, soil, seeds and germinate.

Introduction: Not having access to new pots and planting space needn't stop us planting up a garden of healthy and delicious vegetables and herbs or pretty flowers. A variety of recycled materials from the house like cardboard boxes, cereal boxes and empty toilet roll tubes can be used as planters that will eventually decompose. Seeds can be bought online.

Time: Activity time 1-3 hours each session.



VEG BOX TINS

Old baked bean or tomato tins are perfect for growing plants in.

The best plants to grow in tin cans are herbs like:

- Parsley
- Chives
- Oregano
- Basil

Equipment:

Used empty washed food tins, **peat-free compost/soil**, paints and paintbrushes, hammer, nail, herb **seeds** or plants.



1) Soak the tin in some soapy water to remove the paper.

2) The tin can now be decorated and allowed to dry.



3) Ask a parent or adult to make some holes in the base of the tin with a hammer and a nail. These holes are for excess water to drain out – this is important so that the compost doesn't get too wet.

4) Fill the tin with peat-free compost and plant some herb seeds in the top and cover them with a tiny bit of compost.

- Keep the tin in a warm, light place until they germinate (start to grow)
- If you don't have any seeds, you can plant a small herb plant in the tin
- The herbs can be kept on a kitchen windowsill to use in food. They need to be watered little and often

Question:

- Herbs are good for our health. How are the herbs you have planted good for us?

Extensions:

- Try cooking with the herbs. They are perfect for adding to pasta, pizza, scrambled egg or cheese on toast
- Herb Tea: ask an adult to help.
 - Put a few leaves into the bottom of a cup and pour on freshly boiled water. Leave for 2 minutes to cool and infuse, then enjoy

THE VEG AND FLOWER BOX

We don't need a garden to grow good healthy vegetables, fruit and flowers.

Cardboard box and cereal box gardening is the perfect answer for quick and easy plants that can be eaten and enjoyed.

Old cardboard boxes or wooden crates are good to grow quick-growing crops like salads or to grow flowers for pollinating insects like bees.

The seeds suitable for cardboard box gardening are:

- Lettuce (the 'cut and come again' type is best as you can pick leaves again and again instead of waiting for a big lettuce head to grow)
- Spring onions
- Radishes
- Baby spinach
- Dwarf French beans
- Mangetout peas
- Nasturtium flowers
- Calendula flowers

Equipment:

Strong cardboard box or wooden crate, newspaper, sticky tape, paints and paintbrushes, **peat-free compost** or **soil** and **seeds**.

Method:



- 1)** Take a good strong cardboard box or wooden crate.
 - If the box has a lid, fold down the lid and tape it to the side
 - The box can be decorated with environmentally-friendly paint

- 2)** Line the box with newspaper.



3) Fill the box two thirds with **peat-free compost** or compost mixed with soil, or just soil. Soil from the garden is fine, but the box may need a little weeding.

4) Sow seeds in the compost or soil either in straight lines or, as we have done, in circles.

- Keep the box in a light, frost-free place and keep watered

5) After 10 days, small seedlings will appear, this is called **germination**.

6) The lettuce can all be harvested in 6 – 8 weeks. The dwarf French beans and Mangetout peas can be harvested in 12 – 14 weeks.

7) The Nasturtiums and Calendula flowers can be left to flower over the summer.

Questions:

- What are the three things that plants need to grow?
- Why do plants need bees, butterflies and insects?

Extensions:

- Make some scrummy healthy salads from the lettuce, spring onions, radishes and baby spinach or add them to a wrap or sandwich
- Add the flowers of the Calendula and Nasturtiums to salads, they taste great and make the salad look exciting
- Mix the peas and beans into pasta
- Try this recipe for the peas and beans

Recipe: Pea and Bean Salad

Serves 2

150g French beans

300g peas



For the dressing:

- Basil leaves – about 20 large leaves
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- A small clove of garlic
- A large ball of mozzarella or cheese of choice

Top and tail the beans and peas. Cook them in boiling water for 3 - 4 minutes until tender, then drain them and rinse under cold, running water. They should retain some crunch.

Whiz the basil, vinegar, olive oil and garlic to a smooth green dressing in a blender or food processor. Cut the mozzarella into thick slices and divide between two plates. Surround with French beans and peas, and drizzle with the dressing.

Share your results with us at [@GTFCymru](https://www.instagram.com/GTFCymru)

CEREAL VEG BOXES

Cereal boxes are perfect for growing seeds and seedlings that can be planted straight out in the garden once the plants are strong enough.

The seeds suitable cereal box gardening are:

- Peas
- French beans
- Sunflowers
- Marrows and courgettes
- Tomatoes

Equipment:

Cereal boxes, scissors, paint, paintbrushes, peat-free compost/soil and seeds.

Method:

- 1) The boxes can be used either flat or upright.
- 2) If the box is used upright, line the box. It can be decorated with environmentally friendly paints.



3) If the box is used flat, cut out a square in the top of the box, line it with newspaper and decorate the outside.

4) Fill the box two-thirds with peat-free compost or soil (if using soil, it may need a little weeding).

6) Keep the box in a light, frost-free place and keep watered.

5) Plant a few seeds in each box.

7) Plant out into the garden when they are strong and the risk of frost has passed, usually the middle to end of May.

Question:

- Why do the seedlings (small plants) lean towards the sunlight?

Extensions:

- Look out for the first set of two leaves that appear when the plant germinates, they are called **Seed Leaves** or **Cotyledons**
- Look out for the second set of leaves that appear, they are called the True Leaves. The first set of leaves will die off when the true leaves appear
- Try setting up an experiment by placing cling film over one of the boxes to see how much quicker the plants **germinate** (start to grow), remember to keep them watered



TOILET ROLL POTS

Toilet roll pots are perfect for growing seeds to plant out in the garden once the plants are strong enough. The toilet roll pots will rot down in the soil.

The seeds suitable toilet roll pots are:

- Peas
- Beans
- Courgettes
- Sunflowers
- Tomatoes

Equipment:

Toilet rolls, scissors, ruler, recycled plastic container, peat-free compost/soil and seeds.

Method:

1) Take the toilet roll, fold it in half length ways. Open it out and then fold in half again to make 4 fold lines.



2) Use a ruler to measure 2cm and cut up each quarter 2cm.



3) Fold each side in and tuck the ends in to make a base.

4) Place the pots in a recycled container.



5) Fill the pots with compost or soil and plant a single seed in each pot. If soil is used, they may need a little weeding.



6) Keep the pots in a light, frost-free place and keep watered.

Question:

What would happen to the seedlings (baby plants) if they didn't have enough sunlight?

Extensions:

Try growing sunflower **seeds** in the pots and plant out in the garden. They will make the garden look happy through the summer and keep the birds happy in the autumn and winter.

GROWING THE FUTURE

The Growing the Future project at the National Botanic Garden of Wales is a five-year project to champion Welsh horticulture, plants for pollinators, the protection of wildlife and the virtues of growing plants for food, fun, health and well-being.

Whether you are a seasoned gardener, a fledgling grower or a budding beekeeper – we want to help provide training, information and support to you. For more information on the project's events and courses, please call **01558 667150**, email [**gtf@gardenofwales.org.uk**](mailto:gtf@gardenofwales.org.uk) or visit [**botanicgarden.wales/science/growing-the-future**](http://botanicgarden.wales/science/growing-the-future).

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