

# EDIBLE RAINBOW SALAD GARDEN



GROWING THE FUTURE  
TYFU'R DYFODOL

## HOW TO GROW AN EDIBLE RAINBOW SALAD GARDEN

Hello! My name is Rebecca Thomas. While we are recognising the amazing work that the NHS and the key workers are doing to help us throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic, I thought that it would be fitting to create together an Edible Rainbow Garden, as a living tribute and gratitude to the people who help us.

So far, the rainbow has featured in the windows of our houses and now it can also feature in our gardens.

By eating a rainbow of food every day we are increasing the essential nutrients our bodies require [look up rainbow food, songs and information]. Gardening is great for our well-being - it is good for our bodies physically, our minds emotionally and our vitality through healthy eating.

Together let's make a step-by-step Edible Rainbow Garden, that will provide us with nutritious salads throughout the summer months.

**Let's have fun with nature together!**

### SITING THE GARDEN

Ideally, your Edible Rainbow Garden should be where it can be enjoyed and admired, in the front of the house for instance, but any sunny spot is good.

The garden can be made in an existing flower bed, raised bed, on a patio area, or in a large container such as a barrel or a large tyre.

I am going to make mine from scratch using a raised 'lock-together' bed placed on a gravel area. The area that I am using used to have a garden shed, which I took down, but when the project is finished, the raised bed can be removed and the area returned to its original look.

The raised bed can also be placed on a grass lawn and removed at the end of the season. It will have killed the grass but a sprinkling of new grass seeds mixed with wildflowers will ensure the area regrows for next spring.



## SIZE OF GARDEN

This is completely dependent on how much space you have available. It can be as small as half a metre or as big as 4 metres square.

The size that I am going to build is just 1 metre square. I am using interlocking raised beds but some planks of wood made into a square or some logs or bricks will be just as good. There doesn't need to be a very big depth of soil as the plants are all shallow rooted.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR A ONE METRE SQUARE RAISED BED

1. Cut a metre square of membrane or use an old sheet
2. Place it on the ground where the Garden will go - this will stop the soil going into the gravel or grass
3. Collect flattened cardboard boxes, remove any plastic tape or labels and soak them with water
4. Build the raised bed on top of the membrane
5. Fill the raised bed with 3 x 60 litre bags of peat-free compost or soil, or a mixture of both
6. Mark out the rainbow pattern using stones
7. There are several different patterns, it depends on your area and your preference



## NOW THE FUN BIT!

- Plant the plants and sow the seeds
- Some of the items will need to be bought as plants and some can be sown as seeds (see suggested plants to grow below)
- Begin by planting the plants (make sure that the danger of frost has passed before planting any of the plants out)
- Realign the stones and plant the seeds
- Water the bed carefully with a watering can rose to keep the seeds in place
- Keep the garden well-watered



The garden will gradually blossom and should be in full glory by the middle of July, depending on what has been planted. It will be exciting to watch it grow.

I will place updates of the garden as it blooms. Please send us your pictures and comments by using **@GTFCymru** - we would love to hear from you. It would be great to see your Rainbow Garden – maybe yours can inspire others to create one.

Our Science Team at the National Botanic Garden of Wales need your help to find the best flowers for hungry pollinators. If you would like to support this work looking at providing food for our pollinators: please visit our [JustGiving](#) page and **Help Save Our Pollinators!**

## SUGGESTED PLANTS TO GROW

Many plants should be available from your local garden centre, but I've indicated which ones can also be grown from seed.

Please note - all of the following plants are edible but plants outside of your Rainbow Garden may not be safe to eat.

### RED

**Red nasturtiums** - use in salads; taste peppery (seeds or plants)

**Red lettuce** - (seeds or plants)

### ORANGE

**Calendula** - use petals for decoration in salads (seeds or plants)

**Orange pansies** - use petals in salads and sweets as decoration (plants)

### YELLOW

**Pot marigolds** - use petals for decoration in salad (plants)

**Yellow pansies** - (plants)

**Dwarf sunflower** - allow space; the seeds are edible and very good for the birds (seeds)

**Yellow tomatoes** - allow space (plants)

### GREEN

**Green leafed lettuce** - (seeds or plants)

**Radishes** - green tops and red root (seeds)

### BLUE

**Blue pansies** - (plants)

**Borage** - allow space; tastes like cucumbers; drop into iced drinks or sprinkle over salad (seeds)

### INDIGO

**Indigo pansies** - (plants)

**Chives** - flowers used for decoration in salads (plants)

### VIOLET

**Purple pansies** - (plants)

**Sweet viola** - use in salads and sweets as decoration (plants)



As can be seen in the above picture, my Rainbow Garden is not yet in full flower, so all the colours are not yet visible.

## EXTRA IDEA: RAINBOW GARDEN FOR POLLINATORS

Why not grow a Rainbow Garden for Pollinators? Planting flowers that are naturally rich in pollen and nectar will provide a valuable source of food and energy for bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects to forage on. This helps nature as pollinating insects are in decline.

### Suggested plants for the Pollinator Rainbow Garden:

- Red** - Cosmos
- Orange** - Calendula, nasturtium
- Yellow** - Marigold
- Green** - Lemon balm
- Blue** - Scabiosa, Geranium Cranesbill, cornflower
- Indigo/ Violet** - Oregano herb, lavender, nepeta

**Please note - not all of these suggested plants are safe to eat.**

## 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** or visit **[botanicgarden.wales/science/growing-the-future](http://botanicgarden.wales/science/growing-the-future)**.

This project has received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

