

# SPACE TO GROW



## INSPIRING AND SUPPORTING NEW VEG GROWERS

### About this project

Space to Grow is a new project from Green Chorlton Hub, part of Chorlton Community Garden on Manchester Road next to Chorlton Library. The aim is to inspire and support people completely new to vegetable gardening with:

- a full kit including seeds, plants, a generous-size container with a greenhouse-style lid
- the support of a local buddy who loves growing veg
- a focused Whatsapp group to ask and answer each others' questions and share progress
- free seeds for participants to share with others to spread the inspiration to grow some veg

New growers will be inspiring others to grow some easy, tasty veg by placing the container somewhere easy to see for passersby and offering them free seeds.

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- Who's who and getting help
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- Social media and useful links

Don't worry about reading all this information at once.

Remember your buddy and the Whatsapp group are available to help you with hints and tips!



Green  
Chorlton  
Hub

[www.greenchorltonhub.org.uk](http://www.greenchorltonhub.org.uk)



Chorlton  
Plant  
Swap

[www.chorltonplantswap.org.uk](http://www.chorltonplantswap.org.uk)

**GREEN CHORLTON HUB ~ CONNECTING PEOPLE CARING FOR NATURE**

# WHAT'S IN YOUR VEGETABLE GARDENING KIT



A wonderful **container** for your veg with a special lid that acts like a mini greenhouse, protecting your precious veg in cold weather. You can keep the lid off when it's warmer during the day and after the end of May. Or when your veg grows too tall for its cover!



A colourful **information sticker** to put on the front of your planter so passersby can be inspired by your veg growing!



A handy **seed tray propagator** to get some of your seeds started indoors. It even has a lid to help keep in moisture and warmth. You can also make pots for seedlings from newspaper and used plastic food containers - don't forget to add drainage holes.



Two generous bags of **compost!** You can empty the full bag of *potting and container compost* into your container. Put about half of the *seed* compost on top. Save the rest for your seed sowing. You should have plenty left to use elsewhere or share.



**Plant labels** to mark your seeds. Writing in pencil, you can erase for re-use. You can also make plant markers by cutting strips of yoghurts pots or other flat plastic materials; you may need a felt-pen/sharpie for these.



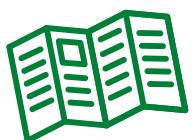
**A tomato plant and a chive plant.** The tomato can either go in your main container or in a separate large pot or bucket. We are still trying to source some free buckets to use - we can drill holes in for you! The chives and tomato plants will be available for collection around the end of April when they are ready in plant nurseries.



Several packets of **seeds** from which to grow your delicious veg!  
**Little envelopes** for you to share your extra seeds - with family, friends or interested passers-by.



Some **grit** to add to the container for extra drainage.



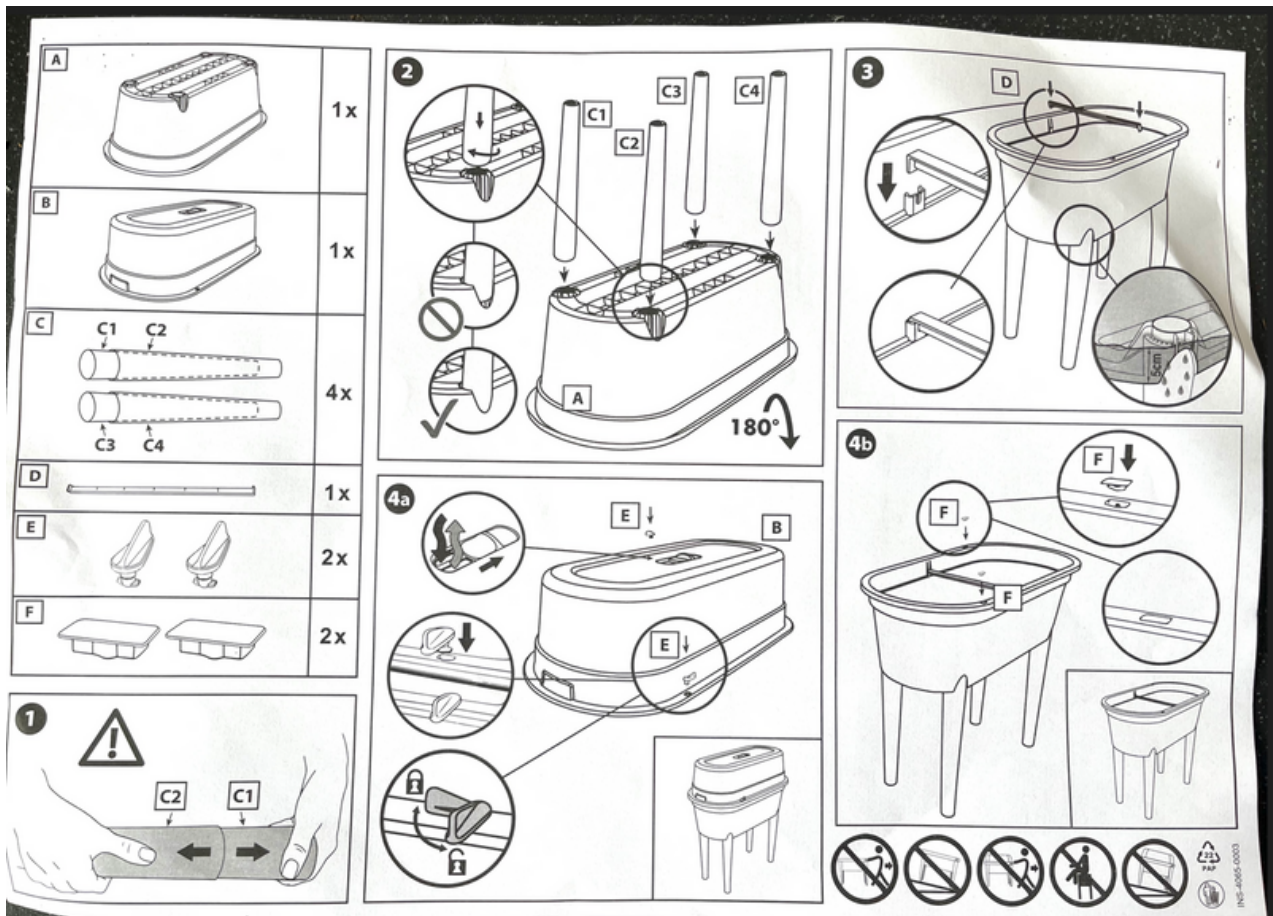
**Information** to help you grow your container veg garden including useful online links. We will connect by email and Whatsapp, with information on our website too

# SETTING UP YOUR CONTAINER



This is your beautiful container, a mini greenhouse on legs!

1. Put together your container following the instructions. It's easier than the instructions look!
2. Once it's in position, add some grit to improve the drainage. Put a handful of these small stones down each of the four legs. This helps prevent water-logging and soggy plant roots. Who wants soggy feet?!



3. You can now add your beautiful information sticker to the front of the container. This is the start of your journey to being the envy of your neighbourhood who you can then surprise with the gift of free seeds!



4. Empty the full bag of **Potting and Container** compost into the container. Add additional compost from the **Seed and Cutting** compost to further fill the container, to about 5cm from the top. Save the rest for sowing your indoor seeds, and possibly for topping up your container later in the season if needed.

# SOWING YOUR SEEDS 1/2

All your seeds *could* be sown direct in the container but many will benefit from being started off indoors then transplanted into the container outside.

- the seeds will germinate better in warmth
- seedlings sown indoors will get a head start so the plants will be ready to harvest earlier
- you can keep an eye on their growth, protecting them from cold and slugs, and only transplanting the healthiest seedlings from the seed tray into the container.
- see table below for advice.

All your seeds are organic, from Tamar Organics. Each plant in the table below is hyperlinked in the electronic instructions. Or visit [www.tamarorganics.co.uk](http://www.tamarorganics.co.uk) and search each plant for lots of useful information about growing and eating them. They are all edible plants, including the marigold flower petals, and the nasturtiums flowers, leaves and seeds! The packets all have growing information on them, although bear in mind they suggest sowing the seeds and spacing the plants at bigger distances than in a container. Make sure there is space between each seed if you can - sometimes tricky with tiny seeds!

**Tip:** Sow more seeds than the number of plants you need as they may not all germinate or grow successfully. You can plant any spares elsewhere in your garden, swap them with [Chorlton Plant Swap](#), or give them away. Keep your seed packets somewhere dry to make them last.

Plant (click on the hyperlinks)	How many seeds to sow	Start off indoors from March/April	Plant out in the container	And/or sow outside
<a href="#">Beans, dwarf maxi</a>	Sow about 12 seeds for 6 plants	Sow in propagator or toilet roll tubes	Plant out in May	Sow in container from May
<a href="#">Chard, rhubarb</a>	Sow about 10 seeds for 4 plants	Two seeds in 5 propagator modules	When they have their true leaves	Sow more than you need then thin them out
<a href="#">Lettuce salad bowl</a> Cut & come again!	About 20-30, then thin them out	Sprinkle about 5 seeds a module	When they have their true leaves	About 20-30, then thin them out
<a href="#">Marigold, herb, aka Calendula</a>	Sow about 20 seeds for 6 plants	2-3 seeds per module	When they have their true leaves	Sow about 20 and thin to about 6
<a href="#">Nasturtium, trailing mix</a>	Sow about 8 seeds for 2 plants	one per module	When they have their true leaves	Sow about 6 then thin to 2
<a href="#">Radish, french breakfast</a>	Radishes like other root veg do not like being transplanted so are best sown direct where they will grow. Sow twice as many as you want and thin them if all seeds germinate to leave about 10cm apart. You can sow them every few weeks!			
<a href="#">Rocket, rucola</a>	Generously sprinkle seeds directly in your container from April. If too many germinate you can thin them out and nibble on the spares. You can sow more later in the season too.			

**Tip:** Many of these seeds can be sown *successionally* which means you can grow batches several times during the year. This works well with quick-growing veg like radishes, salad leaves and even chard if you eat it small.

# SOWING YOUR SEEDS 2/2



In your propagator kit you have:

- a seed propagator with 24 modules
- a tray in which to place the above module to catch the water
- a lid to keep in moisture and warmth

**Tip:** You can place the module container on a baking tray instead and use the plastic tray to sow more seeds in. You'll need to add some drainage holes.

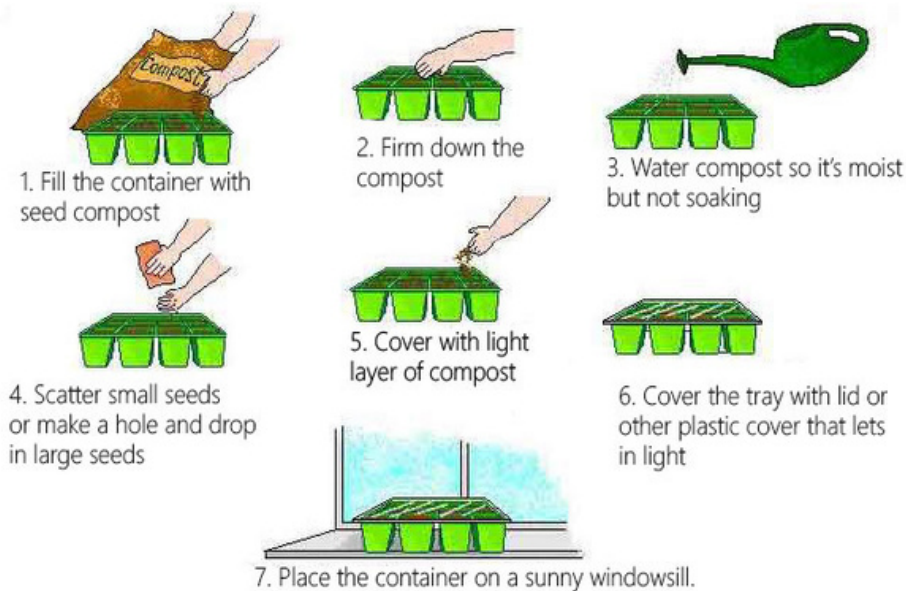


Illustration Nicky Appleby

Follow the same instructions for direct sowing in your container. Whilst the seeds are germinating, keep the compost moist, but not soaking.

Water with a fine hose watering can. If you don't have one, make one by stabbing a few holes in the lid of a plastic milk bottle using a fine screwdriver and a hammer.

Make a label for each plant as it's easy to forget what's what then be bamboozled by what emerges!



**Tip:** you can sow seeds in all sorts of containers so long as they have some drainage including supermarket veg trays, egg cartons, yoghurt pots etc. Fruit punnets are like mini greenhouses!



## Caring for your seedlings

Take the lid off the propagator occasionally for the seedlings to air. Outside, keep the lid on your container overnight until danger of frost has past, usually by mid-May, but take it off during the day to get more sun.

Thin out surplus plants if they have all germinated: plant elsewhere, share or eat them ;-)

As the seed germinates it will sprout a stalk and 'seed' leaves above the soil. The picture on the right shows a plant with its true leaves. Don't transplant seedlings until they have their true leaves.

# SPACE TO GROW: INSPIRING AND SUPPORTING NEW VEG GROWERS

## PLANTING UP YOUR CONTAINER

You will need to transplant any seedlings grown indoors into the container. This is called 'pricking out'. Use a pencil, stick or plant label to ease into the compost and gently loosen the seedlings. Lift them by their true leaves, not the delicate stalk. Make a little hole and plant them into the container, gently replacing the compost around them and giving them a light watering.

It helps to gradually 'harden off' plants grown in the warm indoors by putting them outside during the day for a few hours for two or three days before transplanting them outside. It toughens them up without suddenly shocking them with cold overnight.

Please enjoy choosing whatever placements you like for planting up your container! The main consideration is to give each plant enough space to grow for its needs. You can always pull up and eat anything causing overcrowding ;-)

Here is one possible lay-out. The trailing nasturtium are on the edges rather than in the middle so that they can grow freely and not swamp other plants - they can grow quite vigorously!



Tomato and chive plants will be available to collect around end of April. We'll be in touch!

Veg grown in containers is smaller than in the ground as it's planted closer together with less room to spread.

## CARING FOR YOUR PLANTS

All your plants will enjoy:

- plenty of sun and light - if your seedlings get 'leggy' it's because they lack light. By the way, stroking seedlings helps them grow stronger, mimicking the actions of wind.
- being kept warm indoors or with the container lid on at night until the dangers of frost have passed
- watering. Keep the soil moist but not soggy. A good long water is better than frequent shallow watering
- feeding. We have supplied good quality compost. Once your plants are established they will appreciate some plant food. You can buy a general veg fertiliser or make your own from nettles and comfrey. Check out the guide on the Chorlton Plant Swap website all about [plant foods and how to make your own](#). [www.chorltonplantswap.org.uk/thrifty-veg-gardening](http://www.chorltonplantswap.org.uk/thrifty-veg-gardening)

## HARVESTING AND BEYOND

Most of your veg is quite quick growing, especially when the weather warms up.

It's up to you when you harvest your veg and you can check timings and sizes on the Tamar Organics website.

Here's a few tips:

- After harvesting your first radishes, you can sow them again until September to get several successive harvests. A little tip is to leave one or two radishes to flower: these will set seed and you can then eat the seed pods later in the summer - very yummy and you get more to eat than from one radish!
- The lettuce *salad bowl* is known as *cut and come again*, meaning that you can cut to near the base and it will regrow! If planting in the ground you could space each seedling out to grow as a full lettuce - but beware of the slugs!
- Chard leaves can be eaten small raw in salads or left to grow full-size for cooking
- Pluck some of the marigold leaves to put in a salad and leave some of the flowers to 'go to seed' at the end of summer. Collect the ripened seeds and store somewhere cool to sow again next season.
- Nasturtiums will flower in the summer: pick off flowers and leaves to eat (rather than pulling up the plant). The seeds can be pickled like capers and also dried and saved to sow again next year.
- Let's share some recipes for the veg when we start harvesting and tasting!

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## WHO'S WHO AND GETTING HELP

**Buddies.** You are all linked to a friendly buddy who loves growing veg! Please check with each other how to be in touch. You can invite them for a visit (or two or three), but that is completely up to you both! All meet-ups can be outside. You might also like to phone or text, whatever suits you both.

**Whatsapp group support.** You also have access to the Space to Grow Whatsapp group where you can ask anyone a question, or show your own progress and challenges. For any gardening-related questions or chat outside of this group's topic, do join [Chorlton Plant Swap and Gardening Advice](#) on Facebook.

### Green Chorlton Hub, Chorlton Community Garden

The Space to Grow project is run by volunteers linked to the Green Chorlton Hub at Chorlton Community Garden next to Chorlton Library. We came together through [Chorlton Voice](#), the local civic society, to save this little green space from being closed to the public by owners Manchester City Council who are supporting its re-opening. This project was devised by Danielle who loves growing edibles and helping others to get that bug. Anyone is welcome to get involved with the community garden. Please email Carolyn to find out more [chair@chorltonvoice.org](mailto:chair@chorltonvoice.org) or visit the website [www.greenchorltonhub.org.uk](http://www.greenchorltonhub.org.uk)

## SHARING SEEDS WITH OTHERS

We have given you waaaay more seeds than needed for your container so you can spread the love of growing with your neighbours, family and friends. This project is funded by *Together for Our Planet* from the National Lottery which is all about encouraging more food self-sufficiency. This is why we selected people who could place their containers in a visible front garden.



*The sticker for your container to inspire others*

Each seed packet holds more seeds than needed for sowing each season - there's 1000 rocket seeds per pack! And we've given you extra packs too. Please use the little brown envelopes to split and share seeds. Please write the name of the plant and 'more info at [www.greenchorltonhub.org.uk](http://www.greenchorltonhub.org.uk)'. Always store your seeds somewhere dry.

## SOCIAL MEDIA & USEFUL LINKS

If you would like to share your experience and progress on social media that would be wonderful. Do let us know so we can follow you. But no pressure!!

**Space to Grow project, from the Green Chorlton Hub in Chorlton Community Garden** [this is us]

[www.greenchorltonhub.org.uk](http://www.greenchorltonhub.org.uk) ~ [@greenchorltonhub](#) on Instagram

[www.facebook.com/groups/chorltoncommunitygarden](https://www.facebook.com/groups/chorltoncommunitygarden)

**Chorlton Plant Swap and Gardening Advice** ~ a wonderful group of local gardeners sharing plants and tips

[www.chorltonplantswap.org.uk](http://www.chorltonplantswap.org.uk) for useful growing guides including thrifty gardening tips

[www.facebook.com/groups/Chorltonplantswap](https://www.facebook.com/groups/Chorltonplantswap) ~ active group for swapping plants and asking for advice

[Chorlton Open Gardens](#) ~ a fantastic opportunity to be inspired by other people's gardens. 24 & 25 June 2023

[Vegetable Basics](#) ~ RHS basic guide to growing vegetables (mainly in the ground)

[Vertical Veg](#) ~ tips for growing in containers