

Food growing in the city

What is it?

Growing fruit and vegetables in and around cities increases the supply of fresh, nutritious produce.

How would it work?

Food can be grown all year around by selecting the right type of crops.

In the city environment, popular food to grow includes salads, herbs, tomato, potato, beans, cucumber, and fruits

Food can be growing in raised beds, containers, buckets, hanging baskets and existing garden space. They can also be growing in windowsill and balcony.

For food to grow, it needs sunlight, water, and fertilizer. So it is important to plan the food growing in a sunny site with access to water and fertilizer.

By using the available space, the average urban home can grow 5 – 15% of their food.

Community food growing can be complemented by good information sharing, showing who's done what and when, or who's harvested the food. It can also be a great addition to community meals.

What are the costs and benefits?

Growing food needs seeds, tools, soil (or compost), fertiliser (or compost), water (including greywater or rainwater) and sometimes pesticides. For a 10m² growing area (eg raised beds), the starting cost is around £600-£1000 (seeds £50, tools £100, soil & fertilizer £150, irrigation £100-£500, and raised beds £250).

Growing food needs some know-how but with practice it can yield good results and be rewarding.



Extra benefits

By growing food, city people reconnect to the food supply, the seasons and nature – and the important skill of food growing is kept alive for our future.

Fresh supply of food requires no or shorter time of storage which can prevent the loss of Vitamin C, an important nutrient for health.

It helps reduce food waste because you only pick what you need and when you need it. And the food waste you do create can be recycled in wormeries.

Food growing can also be used as educational resource to teach children, for example, where food come from, what resources are required to grow food and important skills for the future.

Wider impacts

Growing food in the city saves transport and refrigeration costs. During times of emergency, when transportation and distribution channels break down, it can provide fresh supply.

