

APRIL 2020

Grow-your-Own Back Garden Revolution!

The speed at which panic buyers emptied our supermarket shelves, highlighted to many of us last week, the importance of our food security. Keeping us well fed as a nation will be a top priority for the government and farmers, but we must do all we can to help. Firstly, don't panic buy; especially over buying perishable items. This has led to our recycling collectors finding tonnes of food wasted, and other people not being able to get what they need. But secondly, we could help by growing food in our own gardens. An intensively managed back garden can potentially provide more yield per acre than a farmer's field, due to our ability to grow many different crops together, continue "successive" sowing throughout the year, and filling in gaps where they appear.

As many of us have more time on our hands because of staying at home, now is the perfect opportunity to start that veg patch you've been thinking about for years! People across the country are digging up their lawns to convert them into a productive growing space. There are still suppliers you can find to deliver compost and seeds to your home, such as B&Q, Homebase, Chelston Nurseries and Dalefoot Composts, and some supermarkets also sell these items.

There are lots of how-to videos on YouTube, and you can look up almost any question on Google. The main hurdles to overcome in your garden will be slugs, snails, and cats. You can start to deal with slugs by upturning stones and pots in your garden where they hide, or leaving items out at night (such as an oven tray), where they will be hiding under the next morning. You can find many more detailed tips by checking out the Transition Town Wellington Facebook page, where we will be doing a series of posts to help you along. We will focus on

repurposing found items and your household waste to protect and fertilise your crop, such as how to grow seed in waste food containers, using net curtains to protect your crops from cold and insects or cats, as well as how to make compost fast from food and paper waste. You can check out ttw.org.uk too and download a seasonal guide to growing vegetables.

So happy gardening everyone, and I hope when this is over, many more people will have discovered the joy of growing the tastiest, vitamin packed, fresh vegetables for themselves, which will help us greatly with our immune system, physical wellbeing, and mental health, plus increasing our food security.

By Helen Gillingham