

## Planting Your Own Vegetables



Planting and growing vegetables is one of the easiest and most rewarding ways you can get your kids learning about nature and where their food comes from. It might even help you encourage them to try new vegetables or ones they aren't too keen on yet!

### **Carrots (Plant from March – May, when the weather is getting milder)**

Carrots are a great vegetable to grow with kids, you can get different colours and they are easily grown in containers (so you don't need a big garden!).

- Find a big plastic tub or plant pot that is about 50cm deep.
- Drill some holes in the bottom of the container to allow water to drain.
- Fill your container with compost and water it thoroughly. Wait until the water isn't running out of the bottom then get your seeds ready.
- Sprinkle your carrot seeds evenly over the top of the compost then cover with a light layer of compost and press it down gently.
- Put your pot where it'll get the sun during the day and water the carrots whenever needed to stop the soil drying out.
- After about 3 weeks, you'll see the leaves beginning to grow through the soil, weed out any that are very small or too close to the ones that look to be growing well.
- Your carrots should be ready to harvest in about 3 months, but always check the instructions on the back of the seeds you buy as some types of carrots may take longer than others!



## Potatoes (plant from mid-late April)

Potatoes are quite a fuss-free vegetable to grow, and like carrots, they can be grown in a big tub or a container with holes in the bottom for drainage.

To start your potatoes off, you'll need seed potatoes, an egg box and some soil.

- Before planting, let your seed potatoes sprout a bit, this process is called chitting. Just choose some seed potatoes with the most 'eyes' and place them 'face up' in the egg box and wait until potatoes start growing leaves.
- When you have some leaves, place your potatoes in the bottom of your container and then cover them with soil.
- Put your container somewhere sunny where they will get lots of light.
- You'll know your potatoes are ready to pick when they've flowered and their leaves are starting to wilt.



## Runner Beans (plant late May – June)

To plant runner beans, you'll need a larger container with drainage holes and some garden canes for the beans to climb as they grow.

- Fill your container with soil and plant your seeds about 5cm deep and 15cm apart.
- Place a garden cane between two seeds and put your container somewhere that will get the warmth and the sun and keep them well watered.
- If your plants are growing successfully you can add another cane so that each plant has its own. If one is clearly stronger, remove the weaker plant from the container.
- Tie any plants loosely to their cane and they should climb themselves after that.
- Check on the packet how long your beans take to grow but they will be ready to harvest when they are about 15-20cm long.
- Beans freeze well after picking so don't worry if you have too many to eat straight away. Just give them a rinse and pat dry before putting them in the freezer.

