

GrowAbility^{vegepod®}



Gardening Program

Designed with people with cognitive disability for household and service settings

Acknowledgements

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Thank you to the community of Vegepod owners for your inspiring photos shared via social media, and used within this program.

A note to service managers, planners and support workers.

We realise you are a very important part of the lives of those you support. One of the big roles you play is in bringing new ideas and opportunities to those you support to help them achieve their goals, pursue their interests and grow. We are stoked you're thinking about how gardening can benefit those you support and the next few pages explains just that.

We also recognise that often without you, some people wouldn't be able to achieve tasks, complete goals they may have set or enjoy the satisfaction that comes with accomplishing new things. Your help in getting this garden up and running is no doubt going to be important and we certainly don't underestimate your awesomeness! So thank you!

But can we ask a favour..?

Unlike other gardening programs that speak to supporters about how to involve pwd in gardening activities, this program aims to speak directly to the user of the garden. By speaking directly to users, we are empowering them to have control and choice. We are fostering new skill development, social interactions and pride in achievements.

But like everyone, sometimes they might need help and that's where you come in. Throughout the program we remind the user that they might need help and offer ways to ask for help. We aim to do it in a way that still allows them to build new skills and knowledge, which we hope lead to greater autonomy, independent living skills, build capacity and a better sense of wellbeing.

So although the program speaks to the intended user of the garden, please read it also and be ready to assist when asked or in a way that fosters those benefits.

Again thank you for believing in the power of gardening for the people you support. We can't wait to see the results!

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Section 1

Welcome



Welcome to Vegepod's GrowAbility Gardening Program.

This section explains the program. In the next section we do this again with words that might be easier to understand. You can choose which section to read. It is up to you.

Vegepod's design features make it easy for people with limited movement to garden. Used with this program, gardening becomes easy for people with physical and/or cognitive disability.

GrowAbility is an accessible, capacity building gardening program specifically designed for people with cognitive disability to establish and maintain a garden within a disability service, a community garden or at home.

It is based on the belief that people with disability:

- benefit from time spent actively gardening;
- have the skills or can learn to design, set up and maintain their own garden;
- enjoy and benefit from social interactions with others;
- enjoy being active and engaging in a way that is dynamic and reciprocal.

GrowAbility's *goal* is to increase the capacity of people with disability (and support workers) to create and maintain an accessible garden. We believe doing so has a positive impact by developing life skills; improving their wellbeing and sense of belonging; reducing social isolation and boredom; increasing community/social interactions; contributing to our natural environment; and providing a potential avenue to develop a micro-business/ social enterprise.

This program consists of:

- Easy-read and photo-based instructions on setting up a Vegepod garden
- Help on how to choose what to grow
- Easy-read guide on how to plant your seeds or seedlings
- Easy-read and photo-based growing guides on different plants to grow
- Help on looking after your garden
- Help on knowing when to harvest

The program supports the belief that all people benefit from time spent in greenspaces, and that wellbeing is enhanced through meaningful interactions with nature.

Why time spent gardening is good for us all

Looking after a garden gives us the opportunity to reflect upon our hard work, care for our growing gardens and feel pride and a sense of accomplishment as it grows. Regular opportunities to enjoy the garden encourages us to care for it and take ownership of it. The more we start to garden ourselves, the less help we need or resources it takes to keep it going. Our garden then thrives and we see our contribution to the garden and we feel valued. This makes us feel good about ourselves and has a positive impact on our sense of self. It also gives us lots to do when otherwise we might be bored or feel a bit lonely.

Wellbeing and gardening

The benefits of gardening are well known. Wellbeing and resilience is linked to time spent in gardens. The benefits are both physical and spiritual/ emotional. Benefits include:

- lower anxiety;
 - improved concentration;
 - engaged senses;
 - encouraged healthy eating and living;
-

- promotion of being active;
- development of fine and gross motor skills;
- social interactions with others;
- an increased sense of belonging, inclusion and connection to place.

Citizenship and community

Gardening provides a great tool to promote wellbeing within the service or community more broadly. When we work together, it demonstrates respect and valuing of each other's contributions, and helps build or strengthen foundations of trust. We also know that through active participation, we feel empowered by the choices we make and we continue to engage and see our contribution come to life.

Gardening can also provide wonderful opportunities for us to play an active role in service settings or the wider community. Produce from the garden can be utilised in cooking programs, at home or via social enterprises. Produce from the garden can be sold to raise funds for other programs, or be invested back into the garden for further development.

It can also provide excellent real life experiences about managing finances and developing entrepreneurial skills. Produce can also be donated to local community kitchen initiatives to feed local people in need empowering us to become active citizens making important contributions to our communities.

Skill development

Through participating in the design, development and maintenance of a garden, we can demonstrate and learn a wide range of new skills and knowledge. The skills we gain here can also help us feel confident about being involved in our local community or workforce.

What's the theory behind the program?

The program was written with the belief that we should focus on people's abilities, not their disabilities. It has been informed by a perspective within disability studies that believes inclusivity and access for people with disability is the responsibility of society, not those with disability. And that people with disability should be actively involved in decisions that affect their lives.

We believe that programs should be written by people with disability, for people with disability and in a voice that acknowledges them as active participants (and not just receivers of information delivered through their carers or supporters).

In creating GrowAbility, we applied an ethical inclusive methodology from design to development, enacting inclusivity in the project, with the 'nothing about us without us' philosophy. This program was co-written with a person with disability to ensure the lived experience and voice of people with disability was imbedded within the program and its piloting. We believe the result reflects what is important for meaningful change in the lives of people with disability. We acknowledge that people with disability are not a homogenous group and we encourage the program to be further refined, adapted and tested to ensure it suits each individual participant and their own unique needs.

The theoretical foundations of this program are developed from previous research within disability research contexts to understand the impact on identity formation for people with cognitive disability through shared activities such as gardening alongside support workers with very positive results. Source: www.rcypd.edu.au/r
These include:

Recognition theory

Recognition theory argues that in order for someone to have a positive sense of self and identity, they need to feel cared about, respected and valued. Being and feeling cared about refers to our physical needs and emotions being met by others and extends to a sense of love and concern for our wellbeing. Being and feeling respected occurs when we feel like we are being heard, our opinions are being

considered and we are being treated equally by others. ‘Valued’ is linked to how we feel when our contributions are recognised and we can see our efforts are acknowledged by others.

Social geography

Social geography has been used within disability research contexts to understand how spaces and places help people feel connected to their community or how interactions through shared activities such as gardening can help us feel cared about, respected and valued. It provides a way of exploring a sense of “place and belonging” through interactions with others, our environment and the activities we participate in, in a variety of public, semi-public and private spaces. These moments can turn a space (a service building, a community garden or a person’s living space) into a place (somewhere they feel they belong) .

Program design

Who is the program suited to?

We know everyone works and learns differently. This program is designed to focus on what you can do and work at a pace that suits you. It encourages you to ask for help when you need it and we help you make sure you get any answers you may need too. It should be a living program that adapts to ensure you get the most out of gardening. The most important thing is that you are in control and get to choose how you'd like to be involved.

How are the instructions designed?

The instructions speak to people with disability directly. Support workers or carers can read the instructions to if they want to help. The instructions focus on the set up and preparation of the garden.

They start with putting the Vegepod together, and then help with how to fill it with soil or compost.

Next you'll get help deciding what to plant and in the guide are some questions you can ask a garden shop owner so they can help you too.

The instructions explain how to plant all your seeds or plants in your Vegepod. It will remind you of safety things too, like making sure the brakes are on the trolley. To help you look after your garden we have some hints on caring for your garden. These can be printed and left as visual reminders if needed.

We also added some reminders of what you've grown and whether they are good to eat, smell, touch or just look at.

It is up to you how long it will take to get your garden set up. Work at a pace that suits you!

Gardening isn't a race and you can work as slowly as you like or need. We want you to spend as much time as you like in your garden.

What are the gardening guides?

We have included a number of gardening guides to get you started if you're not sure what to grow. Thinking about what is nice to eat, to look at, smell or touch to help decide what you'd like to grow. We have chosen plants that are easy to grow and grow well all year round (depending on where you are in Australia). Feel free though to grow what you like in your Vegepod. Don't be afraid to experiment with what you want to grow.

Section 2

Easy Summary



Plain English Introduction

This program is designed to help everyone enjoy gardening. It's called **GrowAbility**.

What is the program about?

We want to help EVERYONE have the chance to enjoy gardening! For some people getting out to a garden can be hard. We wrote this program to help get you started.

Using Vegepod garden beds means you can garden safely and easily.

You don't have to garden alone (but you might like to). Maybe a friend will garden with you or you can garden in a group. You could garden at a day service or at home.

It's all up to you!

We hope you love the program and we can't wait to see what you've grown!

Why is gardening good for you?

- It helps you be active
- It helps you learn new things
- It helps give you something to do (so you're not bored)
- It makes you feel good to see things grow
- It makes you feel proud of what you can do
- It gives you something to talk to others about
- You can grow yummy, healthy food
- It can be relaxing



Who wrote the program?



(Kate and Jaimsie)

Kate wrote this program with Jaimsie's help. We do projects that help make the lives of people with disability better. We hope you like our program. Feel free to change any parts to suit you.

Happy Gardening!

What is in this program?

This program:

- helps you garden using a Vegepod garden
 - how to ask for help
 - explains how to build your Vegepod
 - helps you decide where to put your Vegepod
 - explains how much compost you need
 - gives you ideas about plants
 - show you how to plant your seeds or seedlings
 - helps you care for your garden
 - helps you enjoy your garden.
-

Some things to remember!

Working with others

You may need some help with your garden.

You may like to garden alone. You may work with others and share the garden. That's all cool!

Remember:

- Have enough space to work safely
- Give it a go
- Let other people have a go
- Have fun
- Take your time
- Have a rest if you need it
- Ask for help
- Be safe!

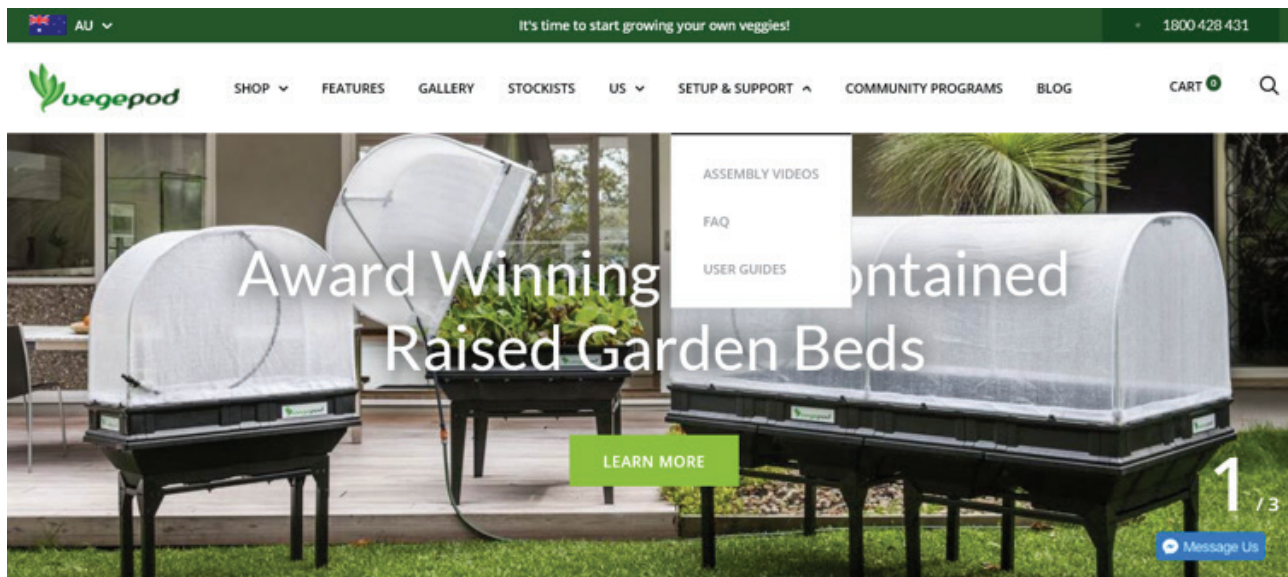
Videos to help

Putting your Vegepod together can be a bit hard. There are videos that can show you how to do it. You can play them as you build your Vegepod. You can play, pause and re-watch them as many times as you need.

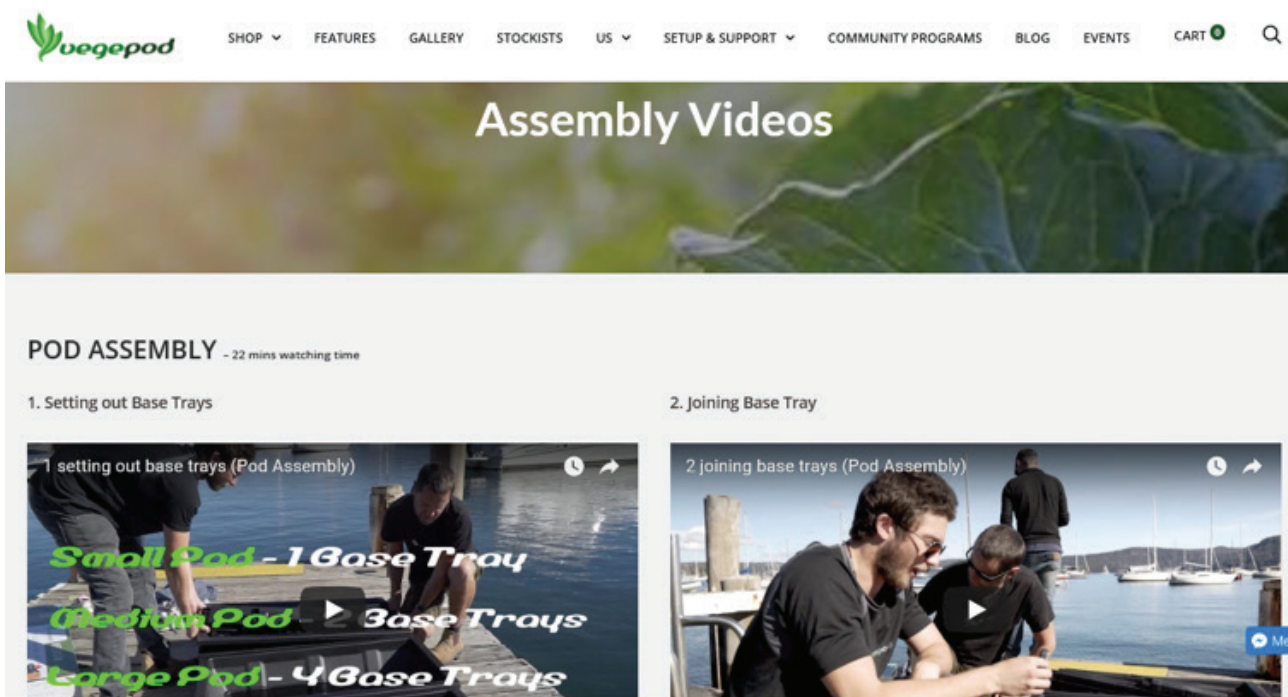
To watch the videos on your computer, tablet or smart phone, go to:

www.vegepod.com.au

Then look for assembly videos:



Start at the first video and continue as you build your Vegepod.



Section 3

Activities



Activity 1: Building the Vegepod

This is a big job and may take you a few hours, a few days or as long as you need. Remember to ask for help if you need it or work together as a team.

What you will need:

- A Vegepod (you may also have a stand or trolley)
- Space to layout Vegepod parts
- A computer, tablet or smartphone to watch instruction videos
- You might need someone to help you

Jobs to do:

Getting ready:

- Open the Vegepod box
(you can keep the brown box that was on the top to one side for now)
- Take out all the parts
- Sort all the same parts into separate containers or areas
- Watch the instruction videos to see how the Vegepod is put together.

Put the base together

- Watch the instruction videos. It's easier to watch one video at a time and then copy what they did. When you've finished, start the next video.
- If you have a medium or large Vegepod, sit the base trays beside each other, add the rubber strip and hold in place with the clips.
- If you have a small Vegepod you'll just have one base tray and can start building the sides.
- Watch the videos on how to put the pieces together. It might be hard to do. You can ask for help.
- When you have all four sides together (like a photo frame) you can place on top of your base tray.
- Put bolts in holes and tie wingnuts to other end
(Remember the videos will show you how).

- Sit the square trays next to each other inside the Vegepod. Make sure you tie them together with the cable ties provided. Again ask for help if it's hard to do.
- Add clips along two opposite edges for canopy to clip into later.

Build the canopy (the white lid)*

*It's in the brown box that was on top of the base trays when you opened the box.

- Watch the instruction videos to see how it is done. Remember it is easier to watch one at a time.
- Fit white poles together using the white connectors so it looks like a frame.
- Tie the black hose to the top using the cable ties.
- Fit the mesh cover over frame BUT FIRST line up the end of the hose to the square hole on one side of cover. The hose will come through that hole to attach to a garden hose later.
- The cover has to come all the way over the white poles. When nearly the whole way on, unstick the Velcro from itself. Then slide the cover all the way down the frame so you have one side of Velcro on each side of the pole. Then re-stick together. This will keep it in place.
- Look for the white string in the box. Tie the string to one white pole.

Join the lid to the base

- Watch the instruction videos to see how it is done.
- Sit the lid over the base so they line up on all edges.
- Click the lid down where the clips are on one side. This will act like a hinge and now you can open and close the lid.
- Tie the white string to a clip on other side. Now the lid will stay open by itself.
- When you want to shut the lid, you click the lid down on both sides.

Building the stands/trolleys

- Watch the instruction videos and read the instructions to see how it is done.
- They aren't easy to put together so you might want to ask for help.
- Take your time and make sure the holes on the poles are lined up when the videos remind you.
- It's okay to take a break. This job might take a while. Don't give up!
You nearly have it done!

Putting the Vegepod on stand or trolley

It might be easier to skip ahead to the next instruction to work out where to put your Vegepod before you put your Vegepod on your stand. This will make moving it into position easier.

But don't forget to come back and read how to put the stand and base together!

Once you know where your garden is going to go, you can place your stand or trolley there.

Then you can put your Vegepod on top.

It will probably take two people to lift it into place.

Make sure the base is sitting INSIDE the frame of the stand.

You can slide it about until it sits in place. Then you know it is safe!

If you have a trolley (a stand with wheels), you can lock them so they won't move.

This will make it safer.

Activity 2: Where to put your Vegepod

It is important you know where to put your Vegepod so your plants grow best.

Here are some tips:

- Most plants, fruit and vegetables need sunshine to grow. Make sure your Vegepod is in a sunny spot. You can test this by leaving your Vegepod in a spot for a few days. Check on it during the day to see if it is in the sun. If it isn't, move it somewhere else and check again tomorrow. When you've found a spot that gets lots of sun, you can start planting.

Some plants will grow in the shade. If your Vegepod doesn't get much sun, buy plants that like shade (like ferns or some herbs).

- Put it somewhere safe – it's good to check the ground is safe and your Vegepod won't fall over. Make sure you can lean, stand or sit safely when gardening. Always make sure the brakes are on near the wheels.
- Make sure it is easy to get to – try to put it somewhere you can get to on your own. The easier it is to garden, the more time you'll spend there.
- Check there is nearby water – A hose is the best way to give your garden water, but you can use a watering can or drink bottle. Just make sure it is easy to carry the water to the garden!

Once you have the perfect spot for your Vegepod, you can move it into place.

Then you can move on to thinking about your compost. See the next activity sheet!



Activity 3: Filling it with compost

What you will need:

- It's a good idea to wear a mask so you don't breathe in dust
- Wear sunglasses or glasses to protect your eyes
- Use can use tools like Hand shovels/ garden forks/ buckets. If you don't have these, just use your hands
- Gloves: if you don't want to get your hands dirty
- Good quality organic compost/ compost

Before working at your Vegepod, make sure it is safe and secure.

If you have a stand with wheels, make sure the lock on the wheels are down.

That will keep it still and safe to work at.

Look around to make sure the ground is clear and safe. This will help you move around safely.

Lift the lid on the side of the opening so you can get to your garden.

The lid will flip back and the string will keep it open.

How much compost

You can buy compost in bags. It will cost more than buying compost from a nursery in bulk (not in bags), but it's much easier to move about. Each bag is usually 25 or 30 litres each. Here's how much you need if you have a:

Small Vegepod = 4 bags of compost (each bag is 25 litres)

Medium Vegepod = 9 bags of compost (each bag is 25 litres)

Large Vegepod = 18 bags of compost

Filling your Vegepod is very easy. Just lift a bag into the Vegepod (one at a time) and cut it open. You may need help to lift the bags up.

Let the compost fall out of the bag. Spread it around. Keep doing until your Vegepod is full ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP!

Activity 4: Buying plants or seeds

At the back of this book, you will find our growing guides. They help explain what to grow and how. But you can grow anything you like.

Think about what you like to:

- Taste (fruits, vegetables, flowers you can eat, herbs)
- Smell (herbs and scented flowers)
- Touch (spiky or soft, smooth or textured)
- See (flowers, food and leaves)

Go to a plant shop and look at what they sell. You can buy plants or seeds. Seeds will take longer to grow, but are cheaper.

Talk to someone about what you want to grow. The plant shop owner should help you.

Tell them you have a garden and whether it is in the sun or shade.

Tell them how big so you buy enough plants.

Tick which size Vegepod you own so you can tell them:

- A small Vegepod is ½ square metre
- A medium Vegepod is 1 square metre
- A large Vegepod is 2 square metres

You can ask them questions like:

- Does it grow where I live?
- Is this the time of year to grow it?
- Is it easy or hard to grow?
- Does it need to be in the sun or shade to grow?

When you decide what to buy, ask the shop owner to fill out this form for you.

It will help you remember how to grow it. The form is on the next page.

Plant name:

.....

I am...

(circle which applies)



good to feel



good to smell



good to eat



good to
look at

How much sun does it need?

(circle which applies)

can be in shade

some sun and shade

Lots of sun

How much water does it need?

(circle which applies)

Water every day

Water 2-3 times a week

Water once a week

How to plant it:

1. Dig a hole the size of the pot the plant comes in
2. Take plant out of container and place in the ground
3. Fill the rest of the hole with soil
4. Pat the soil down so the plant stands up
5. Add some mulch around the bottom of the plant

How to water the plant:

WATER EVERY DAY FOR TWO WEEKS

Today's date: Date in 2 weeks:

How to care for the plant:

(please use short sentences and simple words)

.....
.....
.....
.....

Will I need fertiliser?

(If so, please suggest a safe organic one to use. Write its name below.

Please describe how to use it in short sentences and simple words below.)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

When do I pick from the plant?

(Tick the right answer)

- You don't have to pick anything, just watch it grow
- Whenever you like
- When it is ready

(describe what the fruit/ leaves/ flowers will look like)

.....
.....
.....

Activity 5: Planting out the Vegepod

What you will need:

- Plants or seeds to be planted
- Gardening tools
(although you can just use spoons, paddle pop sticks or your hands)
- Growing stakes and pen to mark and label beds
- Growing guides
- Watering can, water bottle or hose
- Organic sugar cane mulch
- Dust masks and protective eyewear to be worn when mulching

Before working at your Vegepod, make sure it is safe and secure.

If you have a stand with wheels, make sure the on the wheel are down.

That will keep it still and safe to work at!

Look around to make sure the ground is clear and safe. This will help you move around safely.

Lift the lid on the side of the opening so you can get to your garden.

The lid will flip back and the string will keep it open.

Let's plant

If you have gloves, put them on. If not, that's okay!

We need to plan where all your plants or seeds will go.

Lay them out on top of your compost where you think they should go. It doesn't matter if you're not sure. You can always add more or take some out as they grow.

Once you're happy with where they are, you can start planting.

Move a plant to the side and dig a hole. The hole only needs to be deep enough so

the plant sits at the same level. Seeds only need to be just under the surface.

Place the plant or seed in the hole. (Some little plants can be hard to hold. It's okay to ask for help).

For seeds, cover with dirt.

For plants, fill the rest of the hole with dirt so plant sits straight with no gaps in the dirt.

Tap around the plant lightly.



Continue to plant all the others.



Once all the seeds or plants are planted, carefully place sugar cane mulch over the compost. It only has to be a little bit. When everything starts to grow, you can add more.

Mulch helps keep the soil wet so your plants stay healthy.



It's time to water your plants! We want to make everything wet, but be gentle as little seeds and plants might move or get damaged if the hose is on too high.

It's important to water your garden every day for the first TWO WEEKS. It will help keep the plants healthy and settled in their new home.

Activity 6: Caring for your garden

Before working at your Vegepod, make sure it is safe and secure.

If you have a stand with wheels, make sure the brake on the wheel are down.

That will keep it still and safe to work at!

Look around to make sure the ground is clear and safe.

This will help you move around safely.

Lift the lid on the side of the opening so you can get to your garden.

The lid will flip back and the string will keep it open.

Your garden will you need you to care for it. This isn't just an activity you do once, but something you need to do the whole time you have your garden. Looking after your garden will reward you with beautiful strong plants and you will be proud of what you've grown. To make sure it is always healthy, here are some tips!

Plants that are brown or look sad aren't healthy. Think about what they might need:



Do they need sunshine?

Are they still getting the sunlight they need?

If not, you might need to move your garden or use plants that like shade instead.



Do they need water?

Is the dirt dry? If so, you need to water it again.

Remember to water every day! If it rains on your plants, you don't have to water. If you're not sure, feel the compost near a plant. If it is wet, you don't need to water. If it is dry, it needs water!



Do they need fertiliser?

Fertiliser is food for your plants. Ask your garden shop for help deciding which one to use. ORGANIC ones are the best and usually safest to use. Make sure you read the directions on the packet carefully. Ask the garden shop owner to show you how much to use. If you use too much, your plants will get sick.

When you're finished, put the canopy back down!

GREAT WORK looking after your garden!!!

Activity 7: Picking from your garden

You've been looking after your garden for a while now and it's now time to start picking from it. The growing guides or information from your garden shop will help you decide when something is ready to pick. You can also ask someone if you're not sure.

Here's how to pick so you don't damage the plant or what you are picking.

Put one hand on the plant, below where you want to pick and one hand on the flower, leaf, or fruit you want to pick.

Pull the flower, vegetable or fruit. Be gentle so you don't hurt the plant.

You might need to cut it if pulling doesn't work.

Have a bag or bucket or basket ready to put your harvest in.



Some vegetables grow under the ground. To pick them dig around the bottom of the plant and move the dirt without damaging the vegetable. Your fingers are good to use as you can feel the vegetable and be gentle. Wiggle the vegetable loose. Take your time so you don't hurt it.

Wash anything you want to eat first.

Put flowers in a vase or cup or bowl with water so they stay alive longer.

Extra ideas to help you in the garden

Looking after your garden – Things to remember

(Keep this poster somewhere you will see it every day)

1. Did I water my garden today?

(Don't forget your plants need water to stay healthy)



2. Did I check to see if the plants are healthy?

(Checking on your garden each day will help it stay healthy)



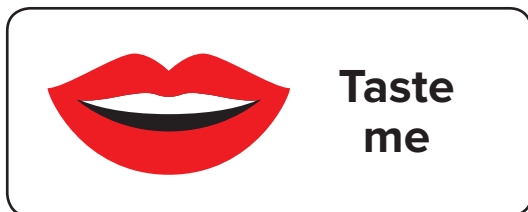
3. Is anything ready to be picked?

(Don't forget to pick leaves, fruit or vegetables when they are ready!)



Some reminders for your garden stakes

You can print these on sticker paper and put in your garden!
It will remind you what you can eat smell, touch and look at.



Section 4

Growing Guides







Beans

A GROWING GUIDE


I'm great to:



look at



eat



touch

When to grow:

I grow best from March to September in Australia (depending where you live).

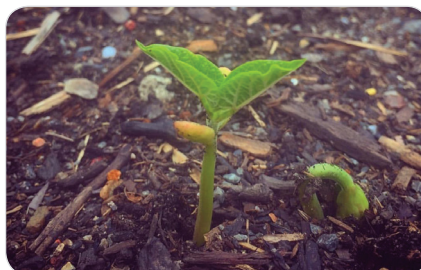
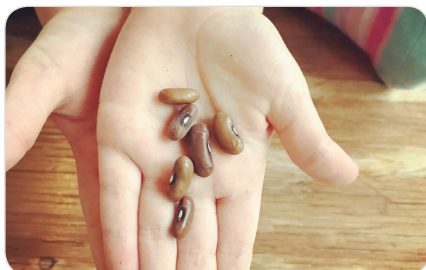
How to plant:

Plant my seeds in a hole about 5cms deep or seedlings 15-25cm apart.

My seeds look like this:

(It will take about 7-10 days for my seeds to sprout into seedlings)

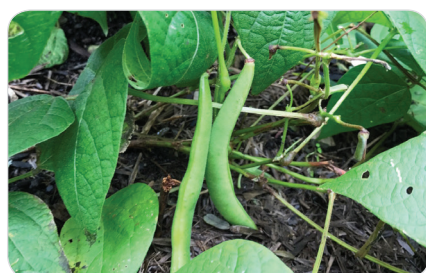
As a seedling, I look like this:



When to eat:

I'm ready to eat when I look like this in 12-22 weeks from planting.

You can eat me as soon as you pick and wash me, or put me in a salad or cook me. You can also freeze your harvest in a freezer bag as you go to save for a big cook off later.



How to harvest:


It takes two hands to pick a bean properly. Place one hand on the stalk, just above the top of the bean and place your other hand at the top of the bean. Pull carefully to break bean from plant without damaging it!




Carrots

A GROWING GUIDE


I'm great to:



look at



eat



touch

When to grow:

I can grow ALL YEAR ROUND in Australia depending on where you live.

How to plant:

Plant my seeds in a hole about 1cm deep or seedlings 10cm apart. If you plant seeds and the seedlings grow close together, you can separate them by carefully lifting out of the ground with a gardening fork and replanting one by one further apart. I don't grow very well next to beetroot, but can grow well next to peas and lettuce.

My seeds look like this:

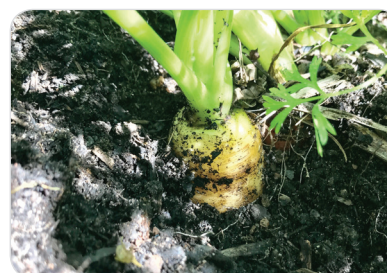
(It will take about 18-21 days for my seeds to sprout into seedlings)



As a seedling, I look like this:



Keep the top of the carrot covered with soil all the time to stop it going hard and cracking.



When to eat:

I'm ready to eat when I look like this in 15-18 weeks from planting. When the top of the carrot is about the size of a golf ball, I'm yummy and tender to eat. But I can grow bigger if you want!

You can eat me raw (without my skin and grated up) in a salad or cut into carrot sticks to eat with a healthy dip like hummus. You can even use me in a cake! You can also roast me in some olive oil and eat warm or cold. Another idea is make amazing coloured juices by mixing me with apple or beetroot or orange juices.



How to harvest:


With a gardening fork, loosen the ground around the carrot. You should start to see it wiggle in the soil. Once it looks loose, hold onto the carrot stalks (down near the base and gently lift it out of the soil. If it is hard to pull out, the soil might need a bit more loosening with the fork as you pull. Make sure you wash it well. It is great to have a bucket with water nearby to soak the carrots as you harvest.




Beetroot

A GROWING GUIDE


I'm great to:



look at



eat



touch

When to grow:

I can grow ALL YEAR ROUND in Australia depending on where you live.

How to plant:

Plant my seeds in a hole about 1cm deep or seedlings 20-30cm apart.

If you plant seeds and the seedlings grow close together, you can separate them by carefully lifting out of the ground with a gardening fork and replanting one by one further apart.

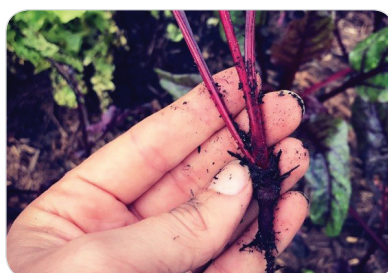
I don't grow very well next to carrots or silverbeet, but can grow well next to peas, strawberries and lettuce.

My seeds look like this:

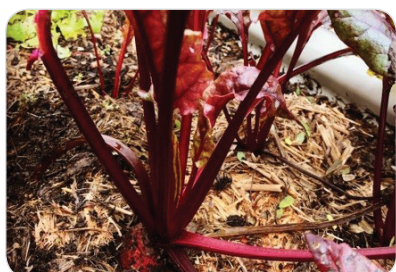
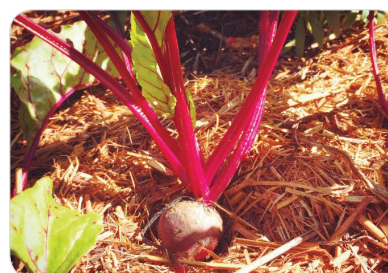
(It will take about 7-10 days for my seeds to sprout into seedlings)



As a seedling, I look like this:



Keep the top of my bulb covered with soil all the time to stop it going hard and cracking.



When to eat:

I'm ready to eat when I look like this in 7-10 weeks from planting. When I'm about the size of a golf ball, I'm yummy and tender to eat. But I can grow bigger if you want! You can eat me raw (without my skin and grated up) in a salad. You can even use me in a cake! You can also roast me in some olive oil and eat warm or cold. Another idea is make amazing coloured juices by mixing me with apple or carrot or orange juices. Maybe you could even use my juice to die fabric, or playdoh or as a paint. Remember to use gloves because my beautiful red colour will stain your hands.



How to harvest:

With a gardening fork, loosen the ground around the beetroot. You should start to see it wiggle in the soil. Once it looks loose, hold onto the beetroot stalks (down near the base and gently lift it out of the soil. If it is hard to pull out, the soil might need a bit more loosening with the fork as you pull.


Make sure you wash it well. It is great to have a bucket with water nearby to soak the beetroot as you harvest.




Lettuce

A GROWING GUIDE


I'm great to:



look at



eat



touch

There are lots of different types of lettuce with different leaf shapes and colours. You can grow just one or many types together.

When to grow:

I can grow ALL YEAR ROUND in Australia depending on where you live.

How to plant:

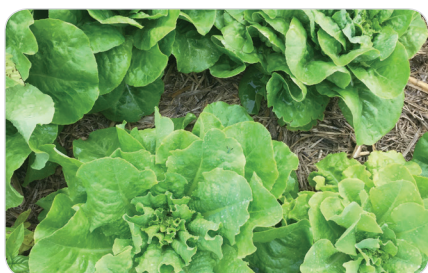
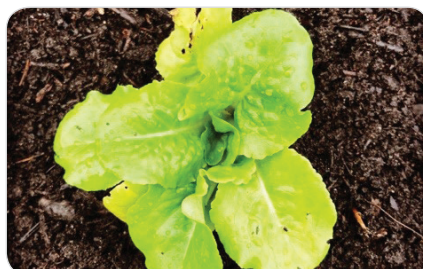
Plant my seeds in a hole about 1cm deep or seedlings 20-30cm apart.

If you plant seeds and the seedlings grow close together, you can separate them by carefully lifting out of the ground with a gardening fork and replanting one by one further apart.

My seeds look like this:

(It will take about 18-21 days for my seeds to sprout into seedlings)

As a seedling, I look like this:



When to eat:

I'm ready to eat when I look like this in 8-12 weeks from planting.

I'm best eaten raw in a salad or on sandwiches. Depending on the shape of my leaf, I can be used like a little boat or cup to hold other yummy ingredients.



How to harvest:

You can just pick off the outer leaves and leave the plant growing for continual harvests.


Eventually you'll see a shoot come up from the centre of the lettuce. That tells you it's at the end of its growing. If you wait through, flowers will appear, and later seeds. Collect these and start growing all over again!




Peas

A GROWING GUIDE


I'm great to:



look at



eat



touch

When to grow:

I grow best from April to October in Australia.

How to plant:

Plant my seeds in a hole about 2cms deep or seedlings 5-8cm apart.

My seeds look like this:

(It will take about 7-10 days for my seeds to sprout into seedlings)



As a seedling, I look like this:



As I grow you can use wire or stakes to support me like this:



When to eat:

I'm ready to eat when I look like this in 10-14 weeks from planting.

You can eat me as soon as you pick and wash me, or put me in a salad or lightly stem.



How to harvest:

It takes two hands to pick a pea properly.

Place one hand on the stalk, just above the top of the bean and place your other hand at the top of the pea.


Pull carefully to break pea from plant without damaging it!



Silverbeet

A GROWING GUIDE

I'm great to:



look at



eat



touch

There are lots of different types of silverbeet. Look for “rainbow” silverbeet, which comes with different coloured stems for added variety.

When to grow:

I can grow ALL YEAR ROUND in Australia depending on where you live.

How to plant:

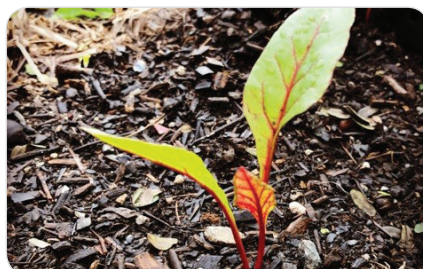
Plant my seeds in a hole about 2cm deep or seedlings 20-30cm apart. If you plant seeds and the seedlings grow close together, you can separate them by carefully lifting out of the ground with a gardening fork and replanting one by one further apart. I don't grow very well next to beetroot or silverbeet, but can grow well next to beans.

My seeds look like this:

(It will take about 15-25 days for my seeds to sprout into seedlings)



As a seedling, I look like this:



When to eat:

I'm ready to eat when my leaves look like this in 8-12 weeks from planting.

You can eat both the leaves and the stems. Chop up and place in saucepan with a little bit of water and let stem (with a lid on for 3-5 minutes, turning over with tongs once or twice) until all leaves have wilted. You can then remove excess water and use in spinach and feta pie, or as a side dish with other vegetables. It tastes great with a squeeze of lemon juice.



How to harvest:

You can just pick off the outer leaves and leave the plant growing for continual harvests.

It will give you many months of lovely leaves to harvest before going to flower and needing to be removed from Vegepod.

Make sure you wash it well for cooking.



Strawberries

A GROWING GUIDE

When to grow:

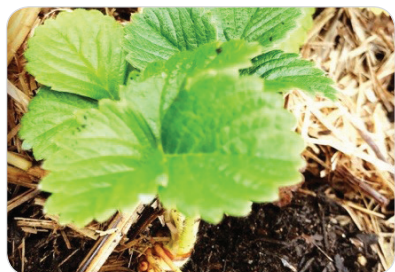
I can grow ALL YEAR ROUND in Australia depending on where you live.

How to plant:

You can grow strawberries by seed, but it will take a year to produce a harvest. We recommend starting with strawberry plants!

Plant seedlings 30 cm apart. As they grow you will notice "runners" or new shoots emerge, these will shoot new leaves and underneath little roots. The roots can be covered in soil and will continue to grow as new plants!

The "runners" look like this:



As a seedling or junior plant, I look like this:



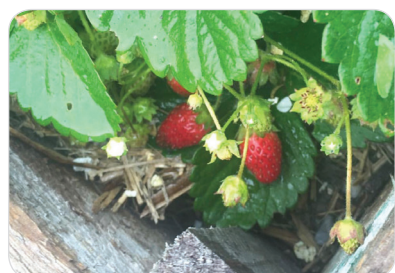
The strawberry will then flower and from the centre of the flower, the strawberry grows. At this stage, the more you water, generally the bigger the fruit grows. BUT smaller fruit tends to be sweeter than big fruit that can taste a bit watery.



When to eat:

I'm ready to eat when strawberries are bright red look like this in 8-12 weeks from planting.

Strawberries could be added to recipes or mixed in with a fruit salad. You can even skewer them onto a paddlepop stick and freeze so once you have harvested enough for the whole class, everyone can enjoy a sweet frozen fruit treat!



How to harvest:

It takes two hands to pick a strawberry properly. Place one hand on the stalk, just above the top of the leaf and place your other hand below it, careful not to touch the fruit. Pull carefully to break the stalk from the plant without damaging it or bruise the fruit!

I'm great to:



look at



eat



touch



I'm great to:



look at



smell



touch

Lavender

A GROWING GUIDE

When to grow:

I can grow all year around.

I love lots of sunshine and I don't need too much water.

How to plant:

You can buy me in lots of different sizes.

Dig a hole with your hands or a tool. Put plant in the hole and cover the roots with soil.

Water and add mulch.

How it grows:

I have beautiful flowers. When you touch my leaves, you can smell my perfume.

How to harvest:

You don't have to pick me. I will keep growing.

But you can pick me and put me in a vase.

You can dry me and use for crafts.



I'm great to:



look at

Chrysanthemum

A GROWING GUIDE

When to grow:

I can grow all year around. I don't like really cold or really hot though!

I love lots of sunshine and I don't need too much water.

How to plant:

You can buy me in lots of different sizes.

Dig a hole with your hands or a tool. Put plant in the hole and cover the roots with soil.

Water and add mulch.

How it grows:

I have beautiful flowers.

When my flowers die, pick them off. Then more will grow.

How to harvest:

You don't have to pick me. I will keep growing.

But you can pick me and put me in a vase.



I'm great to:



eat



smell



touch

Basil

A GROWING GUIDE

When to grow:

I can grow all year around. I don't like really cold or really hot though!

I like sunshine and water (but can grow okay in the shade too).

How to plant:

You can buy me as seeds or seedlings.

Dig a hole with your hands or a tool. Put plant in the hole and cover with soil.

OR

Sprinkle seeds on top of soil and then cover with a tiny bit more soil.

Water and add mulch.

How it grows:

I have green leaves that you can touch and eat. When you touch my leaves, my perfume is released.

How to harvest:

Pick each of my leaves to use in cooking or salads.

GrowAbility

