Grow to Give

Support Horatio's Garden and your community with little acts of kindness

TOP TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

FROM THE HEAD GARDENERS OF HORATIO'S GARDEN

Salisbury Head Gardener, Stephen Hackett says...

1. **A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.**

Even if you simply sow a pot of Basil on the kitchen windowsill, or put a pot of Tulips on your doorstep, you're a gardener. The smallest garden can be overwhelming if you try to transform it all at once, so create a plan of what you want to grow and where, before working steadily to put the plan into action. Remember to always allow for happy accidents and 'off piste' moments! It won't all happen in the first season (especially one as odd as this), but when next year comes around you'll know more and every season will add to your experience. All gardeners are learning all the time. Gardening should be a pleasure, so don't let it add stress to your life.

2. **Look, listen and learn.**

Read gardening books and magazines, watch gardening programmes on TV, look at gardening blogs online (and *visit* gardens too when we are able). I recommend James Fenton's book *A Garden from a Hundred Packets of Seed* for inspiration and Alice Vincent's *How to Grow Stuff* for down-to-earth, practical advice. Other gardens - and other gardeners - are a fantastic source of inspiration and advice. Don't be put off by big, established gardens - it's all too easy to feel disheartened. Instead, find things in them that you can translate to your own plot; whether it's a single plant, a planting combination, a colour scheme or whatever - be a magpie!

3. **Let a thousand flowers bloom.**

Grow from seeds. It's the easiest, cheapest way to get lots of plants - probably more than you'll need, so you can give them to your friends and neighbours. Use peat-free compost and recycled plastic containers (big yoghurt pots are good) and feel free to use your imagination and be creative. There can be no greater thrill than eating your first homegrown tomato, or putting a vase of flowers on your table that you've picked from your own garden.

Horatio's Garden is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Registered Number 1151475/SC045386.
Registered Address 2 Throope Down Office, Blandford Road, Coombe Bissett, Salisbury, SP5 4LN

Grow to Give

Support Horatio's Garden and your community with little acts of kindness

TOP TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

FROM THE HEAD GARDENERS OF HORATIO'S GARDEN

Scotland Head Gardener, Sallie Sillars says...

1. Sowing salad seeds is easy if you know how! The first thing to do is find a good container.

Pots should have drainage holes, small enough to stop compost escaping but large enough to allow for drainage. About the size of a hole puncher is good and you'll need at least four holes to allow for the water to escape easily.

Containers need to be deep enough for a good planting depth and roots to grow. Follow guidelines on seed packets but allow for a planting depth of at least twice the size of the seed and a good root run space. Remember though that you can pot seedlings on to bigger pots as they outgrow the existing one.

2. Soil.

Seeds need a fine soil that will not restrict the root and shoot from growing. You can make your own from well-composted garden waste seived through a garden seive. However, you may get stray weed seeds in this if it has not been hot composted to break them down, so to be safe buy a peat free compost that does not have added nutrients if you can. Seeds have their own food store and newly formed roots can be burned by nutrients they do not need. Gently tap the soil level before sowing, but do not press it down as seed roots need oxygen to grow. Very fine seeds can be sown with a mix of fine sand - that way, you can see where they are.

3. Water newly sown seeds by placing the pot, or tray, in an inch of water.

This ensures that the soil becomes moist without the risk of washing newly sown seeds away. Do not let it dry out or seedlings will fail, but remember not to let it get too wet or they will rot. As soon as the top of the soil looks dry, water just a little bit until you get used to how much is required and how often. Most seeds need light to germinate, but not all, so read the packet instructions carefully. Some need an average temperature and might need to be placed near a radiator or heat source to germinate. However, once they have they can be moved to a sunny spot, like a windowsill, where light is a must for ongoing growth.

Horatio's Garden is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Registered Number 1151475/SC045386.
Registered Address 2 Throope Down Office, Blandford Road, Coombe Bissett, Salisbury, SP5 4LN

Grow to Give

Support Horatio's Garden and your community with little acts of kindness

TOP TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

FROM THE HEAD GARDENERS OF HORATIO'S GARDEN

Oswestry Head Gardener, Imogen Jackson says...

Growing plants from seeds is fun and easy! Make sure you follow the directions on the packet to give the plants the best possible chance. Don't worry if not all your growing attempts work. All gardeners have disasters, but when you manage to grow a beautiful flower, or tasty herb or vegetable, it's hugely satisfying and such a valuable skill. Once you've mastered it, you can supplement your diet with fresh and tasty food, whilst giving your friends and neighbours spare plants or produce, supporting your local community through tough times (keeping your distance, of course). Most importantly, remember to take time to sit and enjoy your garden, making the most of the sights and sounds of nature.

1. **Don't worry if you don't have compost.**

If you don't have compost, don't lose heart, becuase you can still get growing! All you have to do is try growing microgreens or beansprouts instead. Both are quick and simple to grow, as well as being really nutritious - perfect for if the shops have run out of salad greens, or if you want to avoid plastic packaging. You may already have seeds in your kitchen cupboard which you can sprout. If not, most supermarkets sell a range of seeds, or simply search for Real Seeds, Jekkas Seeds or Franchi Seeds on the internet - all are currently still open.

2. **Light is key.**

As Sallie mentioned, if you're growing seeds indoors make sure you put them on your brightest windowsill and once they have appeared turn them around everyday and stroke them! This should help to stop them getting too long and spindly as they reach out for the sun. Stroking them is mimicking the wind, which helps them to grow stronger.

3. **Grow what you love!**

There's no point growing courgettes if you hate them! It's also worth thinking about what may not be available in the shops over the coming weeks or longer. If you need flowers to brighten up you garden, balcony or windowsill, then grow them!

Horatio's Garden is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Registered Number 1151475/SC045386.
Registered Address 2 Throope Down Office, Blandford Road, Coombe Bissett, Salisbury, SP5 4LN

Grow to Give

Support Horatio's Garden and your community with little acts of kindness

TOP TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

FROM THE HEAD GARDENERS OF HORATIO'S GARDEN

Stoke Mandeville Head Gardener, Jacqui Martin-Löf says...

You've made your first step to being a gardener by just considering planting something, whether it be easy herbs on your kitchen windowsill or an entire vegetable plot!

1. **Choose to plant something easy that you like.**

Whether it's a vegetable you enjoy eating, or a flower you like, this is the place to start.

2. **The right location is key.**

The three main things to think about are soil, light and convenience (near to water, near to where you can enjoy watching your plant's progress). I was given a wonderful piece of advice once that has remained with me to never be overwhelmed by gardening - work on areas of the garden that you mostly see from the house. There's really no need to work on the whole garden all in one go, just take it one step at a time.

It's also good to remember to plant enough, but not too many. Don't feel you need to sow the entire packet of seeds! It can often be overwhelming to then have to pot on, harden off and then plant out too many seedlings, although you could always try plant swaps with friends and family if you have surplus plants.

3. **Companion Planting.**

Throughout my years of gardening I have grown to love companion planting. Companion planting is creating plant communities, flowers and vegetables, or vegetables and herbs, both of whom have mutual benefit to each other. Creating good partnerships between plants is not only productive, but can often be aesthetically beautiful. It's also an environmentally friendly way to protect crops from pests and improve pollination. Some good combinations are tomatoes with marigolds, carrots with beans and peas, as well as cucumber with nasturtium.

Always remember to take time to enjoy your labours, to watch the magic as plants grow and to enjoy not only the harvest, but the magic of nature that surrounds everything we grow and the part we play in achieving just that.

Horatio's Garden is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Registered Number 1151475/SC045386.
Registered Address 2 Throope Down Office, Blandford Road, Coombe Bissett, Salisbury, SP5 4LN