



Growing Food

Regrowing herbs, vegetables and fruit from cuttings and scraps

Summary:

Did you know that you can grow plants without having to buy seeds? There are three ways of doing this - by taking cuttings, by using the seeds that are in your fruit and veg, and by regrowing food from scraps. In this activity sheet, we will have a look at these three methods and explain how different herbs, vegetables and fruit can be grown and regrown from what you have. This is such a great thing to be able to do in order to grow food for free, and to share what you have growing with others! You can use it alongside other growing activities to multiply the plants you grow, and help your learners to think about resourcefulness and sharing, as well as some of the benefits of being resourceful with produce - such as reducing food miles.

This activity sheet is aimed at educators, to provide you with information and guidance so that you can lead this activity with your learners.

Key Stage / Age group: It can be easily tailored to any age group - the links below are from the [National Curriculum for England](#).

National Curriculum links (Primary):

KS1 & KS2 - Science

Working Scientifically - please see National Curriculum Guidance for working scientifically objectives

Year 1:

- Plants: identify and name a variety of common wild and garden plants.
- Seasonal Changes: observe changes across the four seasons

Year 2:

- Living things and their habitats: explore and compare the differences between things that are living, dead, and things that have never been alive; identify and name a variety of plants and animals in their habitats, including microhabitats; describe how animals obtain their food from plants and other animals, using the idea of a simple food chain, and identify and name different sources of food.
- Plants: observe and describe how seeds and bulbs grow into mature plants, find out and describe how plants need water, light and a suitable temperature to grow and stay healthy.

Year 3:

- Plants: identify and describe the functions of different parts of flowering plants: roots, stem/trunk, leaves and flowers; explore the requirements of plants for life and growth (air, light, water, nutrients from soil, and room to grow) and how they vary from plant to plant; investigate the way in which water is transported within plants; explore the part that flowers play in the life cycle of flowering plants, including pollination, seed formation and seed dispersal.

KS1 and KS2 - Design and Technology: Cooking and Nutrition

KS1: Use the basic principles of a healthy and varied diet to prepare dishes; understand where food comes from.

KS2: Understand and apply the principles of a healthy and varied diet; prepare and cook a variety of predominantly savoury dishes using a range of cooking techniques; understand seasonality, and know where and how a variety of ingredients are grown, reared, caught and processed.

There are a lot of excellent books and resources available to support growing and cooking at Primary School. To encourage learners, fill your classroom with plenty of cookery books and we would encourage lots of tasting!

Time needed: 10-30 mins to set up, then ongoing observation time.

Location: Indoors, using classroom window sills that get sunlight

Activity Links: This activity links well with our [Monthly growing guide](#) and our [compost](#) and [hydroponics](#) activity resources.

Activities related to food growing

These activities will illustrate how you can grow food from scraps and existing plants - Lots of fun practical activities can be structured from the following:

Taking cuttings

Did you know that you can grow new herb plants from the ones you already have? You can do this by taking cuttings from existing herb plants, which just means that you grow a new plant by cutting a stem off of an existing plant and encouraging it to grow roots.

Herbs that you can grow from cuttings include:

- Basil
- Mint
- Coriander
- Sage
- Lavender
- Marjoram
- Thyme

Using seeds

Did you know that the seeds you find in your food can be regrown into new plants that you can eat? Often we don't think twice about throwing seeds into the compost bin - but if we save them, we could be growing lots of food for free!

Veggies that you can save the seeds from to regrow:

- Peppers
- Pumpkins & squashes (including courgettes)
- Cucumber
- Tomatoes

Growing from scraps

Did you know that you can regrow many of your vegetables from the scraps left behind when you've used them? You can do this by saving the end of the vegetable that you generally chop off.

Veggies that you can regrow from scraps include:

- Potatoes and sweet potatoes
- Onions and shallots
- Garlic
- Leeks
- Bulb fennel
- Celery
- Root crops - such as beetroot, turnips, parsnips, carrot
- Leafy greens - such as lettuce and bok choy
- Cabbages

On the following pages we will look at some examples of how we grow more produce from what we have using these three methods. Once you have tried these techniques, make sure you **share what you grow and what you know** with others!

Potatoes

If a potato is past its best to eat and has started to grow 'eyes' (white growths), then you can regrow it into a new plant.

How to:

1. Leave your potato or section of potato out to dry out a bit overnight.
2. Place it into soil the next day, with the 'eyes' facing up, and new shoots will grow!



Onions, spring onions, leeks, shallots, fennel

All of these veggies are in the Allium family and are very easy to grow from scraps.

How to:

1. Save the base or bulb of the plant, where the roots will grow from.
2. Place this section of the vegetable into a shallow dish of water.
3. It won't take long for new growth to emerge from the centre of the plant. Once it does, plant it into soil. Onions and garlic will grow into a new bulb, and shallots will grow into a clump of new shallots! This means if you buy one shallot, you can end up with many more each year.



Garlic

1. Separate the cloves and remove the outer skin from each garlic clove.
2. Place the cloves pointy side up into a wide-bottomed bowl or jar, with just enough water in it to cover the base of the cloves.
3. Once roots begin to grow and you see little sprouts coming from the top of the garlic, you can place your cloves into soil, with the sprouts just above the surface.



Peppers, pumpkins, squashes, courgettes, tomatoes

These are all plants that you can save the seeds from and regrow either after harvesting them that year or in the following year. Some seeds, such as those from courgettes and tomatoes, need to be fermented in order to grow most successfully, whereas others, such as pepper seeds, can grow with a more simple drying method.

How to:

Fermentation method:

1. Wait until the tomato or courgette is overripe and past its best for eating. The tomato will be soft and the courgette will be yellow and slightly bulging in shape.
2. Once overripe, remove the seeds, place them in a jar, and cover them with water. Don't worry about removing the juice or pulp - this can also go in the water.
3. Cover the jar with cloth (a dish towel will work) and fasten it to the opening of the jar with an elastic band. Leave the jar somewhere warm and bright but out of direct sunlight.
4. Leave for a few days to ferment, until many of the seeds have sunk to the bottom of the jar and you see some bulbs forming in the juice. You may also see a layer of mould growing on the pulp at the top of the jar - this is normal.
5. Remove the mould and pour the seeds and pulp into a fine mesh strainer. Wash the seeds with cool water, remove any tomato pulp, and then leave them to dry. They will dry in the strainer if they are left for a day or so.
6. Place your seeds into an envelope and store them in a dry location until it is the right time to plant them! Don't forget to write the name of the seeds and the date you packed them.

Drying method:

1. Cut open your pepper and shake the seeds out into a bowl.
2. If you are planting them immediately, you can put them straight into the soil. To check when it is best to plant peppers - check out our [monthly grow guide](#). If you are saving your seeds, they will need drying. To do this, place the seeds onto a paper plate or towel and place them in a warm, dark, dry location for a week, until they are completely dry.
3. Now they can be saved until it is the right time of year to use them. Make sure you store them inside an envelope and write the name of the seeds as well as the date you stored them onto the envelope.



Ginger

The ginger you buy in shops is called the rhizome - this is the bit of the ginger plant that grows beneath the surface of the soil. You can regrow it from store-bought pieces!

How to:

1. The first step to growing new ginger from store-bought ginger rhizome is to choose a good piece.
 - You want to look for ginger that isn't too dry or soggy.
 - You also want to make sure there are some growth points on the ginger - these look like tips or points on the rhizome.
 - To ensure success, it is a good idea to choose at least 4 of these rhizomes to plant, as some may not grow.
2. Soak your pieces of ginger in a bowl of water. Leave it overnight.
3. The next day, change the water and leave the ginger to sit in the water until shoots start to form.
4. Plant your ginger rhizomes with the shoots just above the soil and watch them grow!



Herbs - mint, basil, coriander, sage etc.

To grow new herb plants, simply:

1. Snip off about 10cm of a stem from a current plant.
2. Remove any lower leaves from the bottom half of the stem.
3. Place your stem into water and leave it there until new roots grow, refreshing the water every day or two if necessary.
4. Once roots have grown from the base of the stem, place your new plant into soil!



Additional Information

<https://www.lrwt.org.uk/get-growing-for-wildlife>

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/propagation/techniques>

<https://thoughtfullysustainable.com/plant-propagation/#:~:text=A%20second%20way%20to%20propagate,water%20to%20stimulate%20new%20growth.>