



# GYO For Beginners Top Tips

## Raised Beds or Growing in the Ground?

The benefits of Raised beds are:

- Better drainage in wet areas
- Soil that warms up quicker in spring
- Good quality soil with fewer pests and diseases
- No digging required
- No compaction from walking on the soil
- Easier to control weeds and pests

The only disadvantage is the cost, if you are building sides to your beds. But you can use recycled scaffolding planks or decking to reduce the expense. Good quality wood ensures that your beds last for years. Alternatively, you could have no sides and just pile up your organic matter (compost and/or manure) on top of the ground and create paths out of thick cardboard around them. Not so pretty, but just as good for growing in.

### Dimensions for Raised beds

Depth: A minimum of 6 inches (15cm) but you can make them higher to reduce the amount of bending you have to do.

Width: A maximum of 4 foot (1.2m) or you will need to stand on the soil to reach across and so you'll lose the benefit of no digging.

Length: Up to you.

Paths: Leave at least 1 ½ feet (50cm) between and around beds so you can access them.

### Filling Raised Beds

Make sure you buy good quality soil and rotten manure from reliable suppliers – don't cut corners. Try a mix of 50:50 soil and manure.



## Growing in Containers

Many vegetables are happy growing in containers – just make sure they are deep enough for the plants. Lettuce, radish, pak choi, baby turnips, baby carrots are all happy growing in 4 inches (10cm) of compost/soil. Remember that shallow pots and window boxes will dry out quickly so make sure they are watered regularly.

Tomatoes, cucumbers and courgettes (and any squashes) all like deep soil to grow in and will need large pots that are at least 12 inches (30cm deep). But look out for 'patio' varieties that are smaller and need less space. 'Tumbling Tom' tomatoes are very petite and are happy in large hanging baskets.

Peas and beans generally don't like growing in containers as they like to get their roots down deep. But if you want to try them, choose dwarf varieties and that are not as vigorous and large pots – 24 inches/60cm in diameter.

Potatoes will grow happily in sacks or large pots, remember each seed potato needs a pot/area at least 12 inches (30cm) in diameter. So don't overcrowd them.

*Put good quality compost/soil in your containers with fertiliser granules or water in a liquid feed on a regular basis. Add vermiculite to your compost to help stop pots drying out. Put them in a sunny spot and water regularly – everyday at the height of summer.*

### Reliable varieties of Easy-to-Grow vegetables

Here are some varieties to try:

Lettuce/Salads - Crisp Mint, Red Salad Bowl, Salad Niche/Oriental Mix, All Year Round

Spinach – Emilia, Medina, Perpetual

Pak Choi – Rudi F1, White stem

Rocket – Wild or Cultivated

Peas – Meteor, Kelvedon Wonder, Hurst Green Shaft

Mangetout peas - Oregon Sugar Pod, Sugar Snap

French beans – Cobra, Purple Teepee

Broad Beans – Aquadulce, Imperial Green Longpod

Potatoes – Charlotte, Anja, Desiree

Beetroot – Bolthardy, Moneta

Carrots - Early Nantes 2, Autumn King

Kale - Nero Di Toscana, Red Russian, Reflex F1

Radish - French Breakfast 3, Scarlet Globe, Rudi

Turnip – Atlantic, Oasis

Kohl rabi – Azure Star

