

WINDOWSILL GARDENING - HOW TO MAKE IT PRODUCTIVE, AND GET A QUICK HARVEST.

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A good first step is choosing a bright, sunny windowsill in the house-this makes sure the plants grow well, and develop good flavours for eating. Growing plants indoors has most the same requirements as growing outdoors -sun, light, nutrients and protection.

WHAT TO GROW- *As space is going to be at a premium growing indoors ,it's best to choose quick growing and maturing plants sown in quick succession.for example, growing lettuce leaves - sow a few seeds every week and harvest regularly.*

CROPS TO CHOOSE- *choosing quick growing, dwarf or miniature varieties as these take less time. There is a list you can find next to this article on the website with a list of miniature veg. for containers.*

The best success comes from choosing veg to sow that's at its natural growing period anyway if it was outside- so autumn, winter crops are cool season and won't be needing as much light these are plants such as Kale, lettuce, chard and other leafy greens.

While plants growing in spring/summer like tomatoes, aubergines, peppers etc and herbs- they need more heat and light.

Following this guideline by sowing them at their natural growth times will help to get a better, quicker harvest. Although leafy veg and herbs do grow year round, it's just that they grow quicker in spring and summer due to light levels.

TOOLS / ITEMS YOU'LL NEED TO GROW ON YOUR WINDOWSILL :

- *If you are planning on growing leafy greens or herbs then you can buy an all in one windowsill growing kits online varying from £8 - £15 pound. They all have the same basic contents of a windowsill planter, pot, plant markers and seeds.*
- *You can buy windowsill propagation sets also if you want to start seeds indoors. These consist of cellular trays that have a plastic dome over it.*

If you are new to this and aren't sure if this is for you, then the above sets are good to get you started and on the right path.

Although, there are ways to save money and stuff you can reuse around the house. There are repurpose guides in 'gardening on a budget' on the website that will help those who don't want to fork out extra and just want to repurpose what they have.

The basis of what you need is -

1. A light windowsill
2. A plant pot.

This can be repurposed or bought. The size depends on what you're growing. Lettuce or leafy greens will be okay in a trough or a 1.5 l pot. Herbs will also be okay in a 1.5l pot.

3. Compost.

Soiless potting up medium is a good mix for indoor growing as it's lighter, easier to maintain and not as messy as compost that has loam. If you want to know more about it or make your own then check out the guide on composts that will be on the website here.

4. seeds.

Choose what you'll eat and what you love but also what will grow. There is a list of miniature quick growing vegetables for indoors so have a look through that. If you have a very sunny windowsill you might want to grow tomatoes or peppers or just leafy greens.

TIPS FOR THE BEST SUCCESS !

- *Turn the pot every week or so. This way the plant will have equal growth and not be lop-sided.*
- *Make sure to have the plant into the right sized pot, not too big or too small, it should be large enough to accommodate the root ball with a decent amount of room to grow but not a lot if it's too big a pot then the plant will always be too wet and the roots will rot.*

- *Watering !!*

It's very important that your plants aren't waterlogged or too dry. To know when your plant needs watering first see if it's wilted, or lift it- if it's lighter than normal water it. To water a plant fill with water to the brim of the pot and let it drain, if still light, repeat this step. If the pot is completely dry then submerge fully in water until the bubbles stop.

You can tell when a plant is overwatered, it's very heavy and the leaves begin to turn light green then yellow and wither away with the roots.

- *Growing medium*

You can buy pre-mixed soilless mixes from garden centres for your needs these have the benefits of being 'ready to go' and if you only have a few plants to pot up- but if you have a lot of plants to pot up or a few large ones, this is quite an expensive way to go about it. To

make your own mixes use multi purpose compost with additives such as perlite or grit. This allows adequate drainage for your plants.

If you need more information then keep an eye out for our compost guide, walking you through the different types you find in the garden centre, what the difference is and what's the best for you.

- *Feeding / fertilizing*

Organic fertilisers - like bone meal or blood fish and bone, just keep in mind these take time to break down and be used by the plant-apply in autumn or winter or when repotting.

Liquid - like seaweed fertiliser is very good organic fertiliser can also be available with slow release granules in the solution.

Slow release- jobs organic fertilizer can be a good option for the organic gardener or gro- sure granules otherwise or osmocote.

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