



? GARDEN HOW TO
Gardening Made Easy

5 Easy to Grow Vegetables to Start Right Now

Have you tired of eating store-bought veggies infused with preservatives instead of natural vitamins?

Start growing these delicious foods that add immediate taste and flavor to your home cuisine!



There's nothing like the taste of fruit and vegetables you have grown yourself.

The flavor beats anything you will find in a supermarket and the health benefits of fresh produce that has not been stored and transported for miles, or sprayed with chemicals, are obvious. Even if you only have a windowsill or some hanging baskets you will be surprised how much you can grow - maybe there's room on a sunny stairwell or by the car park? Or if you've got a lawn, perhaps you don't need it? Grow food instead! It's fun to grow your own organic food and it saves you lots of money.

I found it pretty rewarding to bring to the kitchen something that I have matured from a tiny seed. Even if you might not have much time or space you can take a shortcut because many vegetables can now be bought as young plants.

With this short guide I will help you started with easy to grow vegetables that you can plant right now.

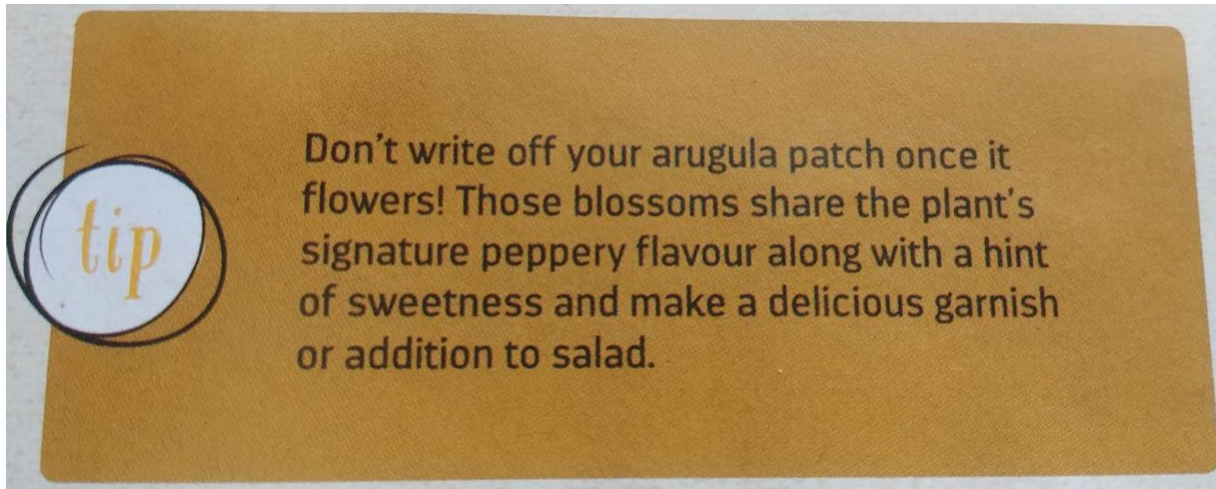
**Where relevant I have included advice for both growing from seed and growing from a small plant that you have either raised yourself or bought.*

1. Arugula - my personal favorite... here's why!

This plant is absolutely tolerable to any type of soil and is not high maintenance. And as we are talking about the quick turnout of the harvest - you can sow it in a pot indoors and watch the progress right in front of your eyes. You can start playing with Arugula quite early in the spring (*as you can see in pictures*), so there's no waiting for the warmer season to come:



Sow arugula in the pot in the early spring and again in the ground every two weeks up to the late summer, in shallow drills. Arugula is ready for harvesting when plant is about 6in (15cm) high. Harvest often by snipping off the leaves with scissors. This is one of those cut-and-come-again plants that serves in your kitchen quite well.



I love arugula for its eclectic distinctive peppery taste that is nicely combined in a salad mix or even better laid on a sandwich bed.

Otherwise you can infuse it into pesto or steam briefly and add to pasta dishes.

Although, in summer arugula will bolt rapidly into producing the flowers, the leaves becoming tough and coarse.

Excellent advantage: Arugula is a shade-loving vegetable! If you have a shade-only garden or want to fill up the shady space, arugula will love your location!

"A Rush University study found that people who ate one or two servings of leafy greens daily had the cognitive abilities of someone 11 years younger than people who ate none. Among greens, arugula is a nutritional standout. It is very high in nitrates, compounds that increase blood flow to the brain by dilating blood vessels. "If your brain isn't getting enough blood flow, it's not getting enough oxygen, which can result in cell death," says Jennifer McDaniel, a spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Serving size: 2 cups raw, 1 cup cooked."

*Credit: <http://www.tonictoronto.com/January-2018/>



2. Garlic

One of the oldest and most valuable of edible plants, one can certainly call it the King of Vegetables!

Do you want to multiply your harvest 20 times? Plant garlic! Each separate clove planted in the ground will return just a few months later a great bulb of 20 or more cloves!

Garlic is super easy to grow and produces so many fat and juicy bulbs that your cooking will be transformed so you won't ever want to go back to supermarket garlic. It's easy to store and does not require much space in your garden or container.



How to grow garlic:

Take a bulb of garlic cloves from your kitchen, split it into cloves and plant them from October to December or until your ground freezes. In cooler areas try planting in early spring, as soon as soil can be worked, for a fall harvest.

Make sure you provide a sunny spot and a light soil. Follow the same practice in a container.

Prepare a row of small holes 10 cm apart and plant one clove just below the surface in each, with the root end downwards and cover with soil.

If you plant more than one row, space the rows 30 cm apart.



Garlic takes from 7 to 8 months to grow but the results worth the wait for sure! Because garlic has shallow roots and little foliage cover, weeds quickly occupy the space around the plants. Cultivate grounds regularly to remove weeds, taking care not to damage the garlic bulbs. In cold areas, cover with several inches of mulch during winter. In spring and early summer, an occasional thorough watering during dry spells will improve yields. Don't water once the bulbs are large and well-formed because this could encourage rotting.

The bulbs are ready to be harvested when two of the bottom leaves turn yellow. If you wait until all leaves turn yellow the bulbs will overripe where the cloves in the bulbs will separate from each other and resulting un-tight heads will not store as long. Harvesting the bulbs out earlier will diminish shelf life in storage, and might limit the bulbs reaching full size. Use a fork to loosen the bulbs from the soil instead of pulling them out.

As opposed to onion do not let garlic dry on the ground between the rows where you pulled them out. Instead, move them to the shady area or bring indoors but in both cases make sure to provide a good air circulation.

Garlic can be stored for months but check the bulbs occasionally for rot or mold.

BONUS tip: although supermarket garlic can be planted, afford yourself to buy garlic bulbs or sets from a nursery or garden center.

*Credits: <https://awaytogarden.com/the-tricky-matter-of-when-to-harvest-garlic/>





3. Kale

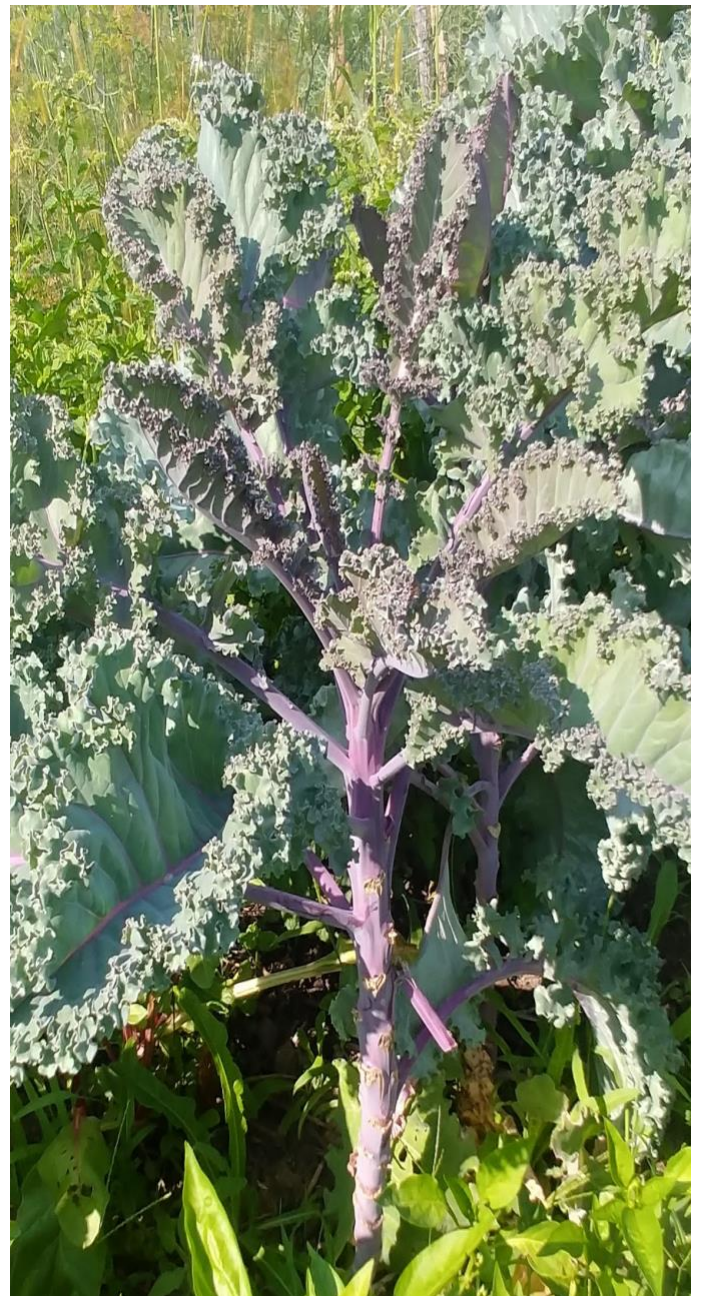
The advantages of kale are quite attractive - it is both a hardier and more heat-tolerant plant than many other cold crops and is not as vulnerable to the pests and diseases that afflict the others. Plus, as one of the most photographed garden vegetables you will enjoy kale aesthetically too.

Kale can also be grown in virtually any soils, including impoverished, wet, soggy and poor ones. They don't require heavy applications of fertilizer, but adding composted manure, leaf mold, or garden compost will improve the kale crop. The leaves are so ornamental that many varieties of kale are sold for purely decorative purposes. Edible kale is usually green, blue-green or red.

Culinary wise kale is tasty and robust, full of vitamins A and C, and packed with minerals.

Because of the extreme hardiness, kale is available when it is needed most - in late fall and winter.

The flavor develops as the leaves mature, and frost improves it even further. The cooler the weather, the sweeter and tastier the leaves.





Sow kale directly in the garden or grow it from seeds indoors. Thoroughly prepare the soil before sowing by raking the surface to create a fine crumbly texture. Use a string as a guide and make a 1/2in (1cm) drill.

Kale is such a tolerable plant that their winter leaves can be harvested from late fall to early spring, and an earliest harvest can be taken from plants sown in early spring. The tender young leaves from this earlier crop are delicious in salads or when cooked briefly with oil and garlic.

A second sowing of kale in summer times will keep the harvest going for at least six months.

If space is limited, grow a few plants in your flower border or in winter containers. If you are gardening in a cold climate, remember that kale is immensely tough. No wonder it has been a staple of kitchen gardens for centuries.

Harvest kale while the leaves are still young and tender; older leaves quickly become tough and bitter. Start from crown of the plant and continue outwards, removing the tips of the stems with a sharp knife. You can also top off the plant completely by leaving only 1-2 inches stem cuts. This will encourage the plant to bush out and produce more side shoots from the joints where the leaves were removed previously.



4. Lettuces of all types

Lettuces could be divided into two main categories: hearting lettuce that produces a dense center and loose-leaf types with the more open arrangement of leaves.

The big advantage of growing a loose-leaf lettuce is that you can consider as cut-and-come-again vegetable, like the photo below:



Whereas hearting lettuce is generally harvested whole:





In general, all lettuces can be sown frequently throughout the warm seasons. If you want instant producing green leaves sow the Lettuce every two weeks from April onward until late September. They give you [loads of the base for your salads](#) for several months and you will save money by getting them from your garden much cheaper than salads in the shops!

Keep in mind that lettuce is an annual plant that matures in weeks and then goes on to flower. The time between reaching maturity and bolting is commanded by the environmental conditions where hot and dry weather cheer bolting, but all varieties react differently.

To help [prevent flowering](#), add mulch around the plants and water during dry weather periods. lettuce that has gone to seed is often bitter and will deliver a cascade of foliage and flowers if left alone.



Lettuce will grow quite easy with conditions that allow it to develop quickly so that the leaves do not develop a bitter taste.

Another advantage of lettuces - in the case when all your sunny spots are taken they like partial shade placement as well.



Also, if you have the spaces to fill between crops that take longer to grow, add in your lettuces! With the curly decorative leaves as on Sangria or Lollo Rosso types of lettuce, you can beautify your flowerbeds. Mix them with flowers in containers or make borders with them!



Sow the seeds thinly, in drills 1/2in (1cm) deep. You can also sow lettuce indoors in flats or cell packs in a good potting mix. Warm but not hot conditions are needed for lettuce seeds to germinate and grow on - keep the soil temperature below 75 F (24 C). Harden off seedlings before planting out in the garden over 7-10 days so that they become trained to strong sunlight, cool nights and less-frequent watering.

Make thinning on the seedlings if you want lettuce to grow in bigger leaves. Otherwise, let them grow densely as cut-and-come-again crops.

[Harvest Lettuce](#) by cutting rather than pulling. Snip off cut-and-come-again crops with scissors. In hot weather, pick lettuce in the morning, to prevent wilting.



5. Swiss Chard

Swiss chard is second in value nutritional plant, just after spinach. This plant is worth growing just because of the content of vitamins as well as an impressive amount of potassium, magnesium, calcium, copper and more vitamins and minerals. In addition, Swiss chard is exceptionally outstanding for having unique properties that make it greatly helpful for anticipating and treating diabetes.

One advantage it has over spinach that it grows long without turning into flowering and producing seeds aftermath.



Harvest the chard leaves for salads when young if you'd like to eat them raw. Be careful not to cut too close to the ground because if you cut them too short the base will not be able to sprout again. When you

do that, it causes Swiss chard to reproduce leaves again several times. The leaves of Swiss chard are the best when eaten on the day they're picked, as they quickly get soggy, even when stored in a bag in the refrigerator.

The lesson for the Swiss chard is: [harvest little and often!](#)

Swiss chard is one of the easiest vegetables to grow. They tolerate any amount of neglect and still look good and produce leaves.

Just make sure to weed them out and keep the soil moist during the dry weather for the best leaves, but the plant itself will withstand some drought once established.



**Credits:*

["Grow Your Own Vegetables" by Carol Klein](#)

["How to Grow your Food, A Guide for Complete Beginners" by Jon Clift](#)