



**pub is the hub**

## **Pub Garden Advice for Beginners**





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Pub is The Hub has joined with Horticap, a charity based in the same town as its Administrative Office, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, to provide some advice for those new to gardening, in pubs and elsewhere.

Horticap is a registered charity which operates from Bluecoat Wood Nurseries, Otley Road, Beckwithshaw, Harrogate, HG3 1QL. It aims to provide its students, adults with learning and other disabilities, with a supportive and friendly working environment so that they may enhance their social and communication abilities and develop horticultural skills.

### Statement from Horticap Patron, Alan Titchmarsh MBE VMH DL

*"The spirit and enterprise of Horticap never ceases to amaze and delight me. I am proud to be their patron and urge everyone who knows the therapeutic qualities of gardening to support the sterling work they do. **Using gardening as a means of enriching lives is something I have valued all my life; Horticap is living proof that it can transform lives.**"*

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It is the clear benefit of gardening that seems to have resulted in several pubs asking for support to create gardens and allotments so we felt a guide for those new to gardening might help to get things off the ground! The social benefit of getting like minded people together can't be over emphasised, particularly in these challenging times.

Creating a vegetable garden is a great way to eat fresh, healthy food, while providing many added benefits –

- an absorbing and interesting pastime
- a rewarding activity
- stimulating and therapeutic
- an excellent social or group network activity
- healthy physical work

You don't even have to stick to growing a mix of vegetables you could mix in flowers to add colour, fragrance and additional biodiversity.

Starting a new vegetable patch or garden is easy to do. You can start at any time of the year, but spring and autumn are the best times to begin work. The best way to start is to work on one manageable area at a time. Dig the soil thoroughly to remove weeds and stones and rake it level so it's easy to manage. Soil will always benefit from the addition of some well-rotted organic material either from your own compost bin or in the form of manure. Where possible, leave the soil for a couple of weeks after weeding, so that any annual seeds brought to the surface germinate. you can then simply hoe these off before sowing or planting. Prepared areas that you will not be using straight away can be covered with a temporary membrane or old carpet to keep out the light and suppress weeds.

Raised beds are an ideal way to start off and can be constructed to become additional garden furniture with seating built in and will benefit anyone with limited mobility. Raised beds also allow your garden to be gradually developed adding additional raised beds each season. They can be easily constructed from timber with minimal tools but will last longer if treated to prevent rot. Raised beds approximately 1 meter square are ideal. If you don't have a readily available area of ground to cultivate then you can also get equally good results by growing in Containers, or using Trellis to grow climbing plants against a wall.



When planning the position of your new garden remember, some plants will thrive in dappled shade, but most need sun to grow well, so avoid growing under a tree or in heavy shade. If you can try to pick an area that's level, has good levels of sunshine and is sheltered from the worst of the wind. Also if you can, easy access to a tap or a water butt will cut down on trips with cans of water.

Once you have decided on the location of your gardening space and you have done the preparation it is time to think about what you will be growing. Some vegetables are easier to start off with than others. If you're new to growing, it's a good idea to start with easy-to-grow crops first.

**Courgettes, potatoes, Spring onions, beans, strawberries, radish, lettuce, cabbage and beetroot** are some great vegetable crops for starting off. Start off with small quantities of vegetables that you know you will use. Some crops like Lettuce, Radish and Spring onions can be re seeded at intervals to get continual crops.

If possible you can start off plants, indoors, and plant them out when they are larger and the weather is favourable. This will also reduce the possibility of damage from pests. Modular type trays are ideal for sowing seeds to start off your plants. When rooted and ready to be planted they can be popped out and put straight in the ground avoiding the fiddly pricking out process. It's always best to plant in rows following spacing guidelines on the seed packets this will make weeding and picking much easier.

Seedlings and new plantings can be a magnet for wildlife to snack on and may need some protection. Whilst you can purchase small cages or covers they are easily made using some lengths of plastic pipe pushed into the ground to form a hoop and some netting stretched over.

These covers can also be used if growing brassicas such as sprouts or cabbage, they will help prevent cabbage white butterflies from laying their eggs and your plants being ravaged



by the emerging caterpillars. A net can also be used if growing fruit to prevent birds helping themselves.



Once your plants are growing keep a regular check for weeds, on small areas these are best removed by hand or on larger areas you can use a hoe. This should be done on a regular basis to prevent weeds getting established.

If you have prepared your site and incorporated some well-rotted manure this should provide sufficient food for most plants through the season however certain fruit crops like Tomatoes will benefit from an organic feed added to the watering can.

Also your garden does not have to be just for the summer months' crops such as Spring cabbage, sprouts, spring onions and some root vegetables can be harvested for a longer season.

If you do choose to add flowers to your garden try to add a mix of some shrubby plants, perennials and seasonal bedding. The shrubby plants especially evergreens will give you some structure in winter, Perennials will provide lovely floral displays during the warmer months and then die back over winter ready to re-emerge in the spring and bedding plants will give carpets of vibrant colour but need replacing as the seasons change.

## Frequently Used Gardening Terms

**Annual** - A plant that will flower and set seed, and complete its lifecycle, in one year.

**Aphid** - Small sap sucking insects called greenfly and blackfly, often found on beans and roses. They can damage plants but mostly are harmless.

**Bolting** - Vegetable crops that flower and set seed before you would like them to. Often caused by stress, such as temperature changes, drought or flooding. Common with beetroot and salad leaves.

**Cloche** - A cover for protecting plants from cold and pests. Can be made using netting, horticultural fleece or plastic, depending on what you're using it for.

**Dead-head** - To remove the spent blooms on a plant to encourage further flowering or to prevent self-seeding.

**Deciduous** - describes plants that shed leaves at the end of the growing season and renew them at the beginning of the next.

**Drill** - Used to describe a furrow made to sow seeds in to.

**Earlies** - Usually used to describe a crop of potatoes (also peas), which is harvested earlier than the main crop.

**Evergreen** - describes plants that retain most of their leaves throughout the year.

**Fertiliser** - Organic or inorganic material added to soil to improve fertility. Can also be used to describe liquid feeding of plants, providing them with the nutrients they need to thrive.

**Full shade** - Complete shade with no sunlight at all. Often beneath dense tree canopies or at the immediate north-facing wall of a house.

**Full sun** - Six hours or more of direct sunlight.

**Germination** - the physical and chemical changes that take place as a seed starts to grow and develop into a plant.

**Ground cover** - Low-growing plants which spread across the soil and can be grown beneath a tree or near a path. Often used in areas where little else grows.

**Herbaceous plant** - A non-woody perennial plant, often dying back in the winter and becoming dormant by means of underground rootstocks or a woody base. Growth resumes in the spring.

**Humus** - Organic matter in the soil, often the result of decayed leaves, manure and compost, much of which has been eaten and recycled by worms.

**Irrigation** - Watering plants, usually employing a system, such as a sprinkler or a drip-irrigation system, to do so.

**Mildew** - Fungal infections of leaves, often brought on by wet weather.

**Mulch** - Layer of material placed on the soil and around plants to retain moisture, suppress weeds and improve soil structure. Materials used for mulching include well-rotted manure, compost, polythene sheets or gravel.

**Organic** - Used to describe food that's been grown without artificial fertilisers, fungicides or pesticides. Also used to describe non-artificial fertilisers themselves.

**Perennial** - Plants that live for more than many years.

**Pesticide** - Usually an artificial chemical used to kill insect pests. Sometimes used to describe organic solutions.

**Pollinator** - Creatures that fertilise flowers as they visit them, typically bees, moths, butterflies, birds and bats.

**Pot on** - To remove a plant from its container (normally when it has outgrown the space) and move into a larger container.

**Root crop** - A vegetable, such as a carrot or parsnip, where the roots are harvested to eat.

**Standard** - A tree or shrub that has been trained to a certain height with a long bare stem and foliage at the top.

**Topsoil** - The soil you plant into. It's the most nutritious part of the soil, compared to subsoil, which isn't very nutritious at all.