



GROW TOGETHER

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Scouting Ireland and the SDGs

The SDGs help us to focus on what truly matters. Environmental and social crisis are impacting communities all over the world.

Getting outside, making friends and taking positive action is a simple way to challenge the unequal global system we live in.

When we garden as a community we can foster collective resilience to challenges, improve biodiversity and soil health, reduce our carbon footprint and create inclusive and green spaces in our community.

We believe that when we work together, we can make the world a little better than we found it.



Why garden?



So why is community gardening important? Although there are many ways community gardening is important improving biodiversity, reducing carbon footprints and improving soil health – all exceptionally important to take care of nature all around it - there are tremendous benefits for communities and even you too!

When we garden alone and together, we instantly feel **CONNECTION**. To ourselves, to others and the world all around us. Our mind focuses, or body relaxes, and our senses are activated by the smells and textures of nature.

Repeated exposure to this type of activity relaxes our mind and body, improving our overall mental and physical health overtime. When we garden **TOGETHER**, this impact is only magnified as we see how much we can achieve when we work together.

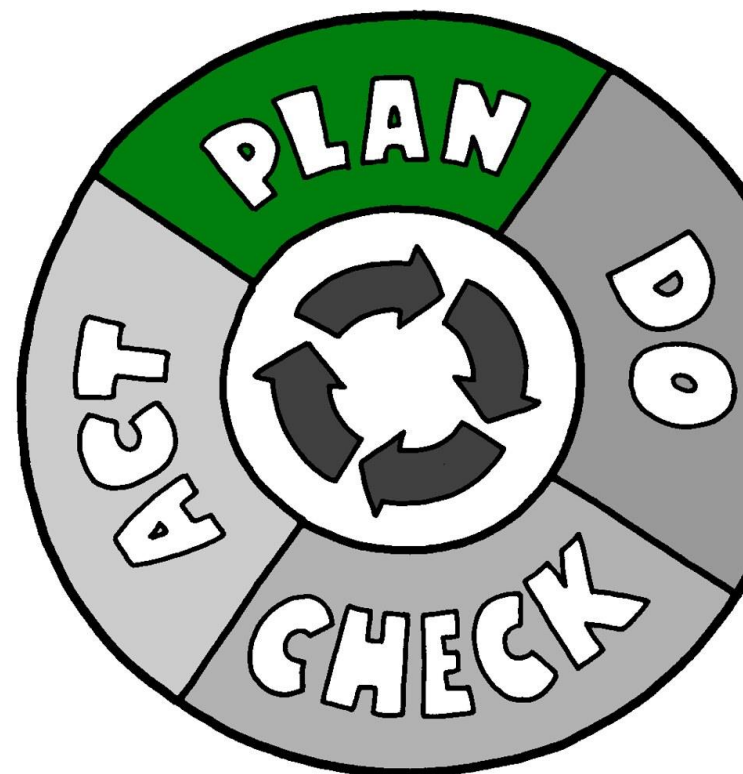


First things first; be prepared!

We hope this guide can help you make many **happy memories** – enjoying delicious harvest and sharing food around a table with new friends.

Let's go through a few simple safety tips before you get started.

- Wear gloves – protect your hands from cuts, blisters and thorns
- Warm up – before digging up the garden, warm up your body with a tea and walk, even better to bring a friend!
- Change it up - to avoid aches and pains from repetitive digging, planting, raking, pruning, switch tasks around
- Kneel don't bend – bending you back will cause more aches than kneeling. Get something to rest your knees on or even wear knee pads
- Lift with your legs – if lifting anything heavy, make sure you engage your legs or ask someone to help you
- Wear SPF – even if you think you don't need it, you do!
- Masks and protective eye wear - this is important if you suffer from allergies or asthma
- Hydration – make sure to stay hydrated with water and fruits.
- Check for ticks – ticks love garden edges, so make sure you check your knee/elbow creases and clothes for any ticks that may have joined your gardening
- Don't use pesticides – please avoid the use of chemicals in the environment that harm insects and look for natural deterrents



Let the gardening begin! Do this...

Do this...



Decide where you would like to garden – in a pot, a container, a plot, a derelict site? Do you have a south or north facing window-sill, balcony, patio, site another garden?



Discover what soil type will you work with – alkaline, acidic, loam, sandy, silt? Run a simple soil test to find out so you know what type of plants you go grow.



Plan the layout of what you want to plant - arrange flowers according to height and colour, plant veg that support each others growth, manage spacing of seeds per pots



Water & feed regularly - set up a watering and feeding routine so your plants needs are met



Learn the essential skills to garden well to prepare your garden for success - weeding, mulching, fertilizing, sowing, watering and feeding your plants

... and this!



Start small - take it one step at a time. Use cardboard to keep weeds at bay from areas of the garden you are not working on



Thin new sprouts to allow space between plants to grow



Keep an eye out – check plants for pests like slugs or snails that might wander onto your plants. Simply pick them up and point them in a new direction to wander off to



Make compost - simple and cheap way to access soil for planting while reducing food and garden waste



Invite community members to come help you garden! Gardening together is a great social activity.



Remember, don't ...



Be afraid of cutting –
learn when to prune plants
and you'll be rewarding with
bigger and better flowers
and fruits



Forget to be kind to wildlife–
learning to share your newly
created habitat with bees,
birds, spiders and
hedgehogs will show how
we can all co-exist peacefully



Isolate –
invite the community! Host
a harvest night or garden
picnic to share and
appreciate your efforts with
friends



Responsibility to nature

Together we can each take positive actions for nature and protect biodiversity by striving towards the principles of Leave No Trace. Here are a few simple ideas to get you started:

- Choose pollinator friendly plants to grow
- Try to grow your favorite food that you want to eat
- Eliminate pesticides
- Leave the leaves in autumn in appropriate areas to let insects have somewhere warm to thrive
- Let grass and wildflowers grow and make pathways to encourage people to get outside and explore
- Create log piles for insects
- Create interpretation boards to educate your community on what is around them
- Arrange a community harvest day and cooking competition – apple pie, blackberry tarts, gooseberry jam – opportunities are endless!

More Information: <https://www.leavenotraceireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Leave-No-Trace-Ireland-Biodiversity-Toolkit-for-Communities.pdf>



Make the seasons count!

January: Plan your garden goals and set your budget, turn your compost and start digging beds (if you feel up to it!), set out your water harvesting containers and butts.

February: Sow green-house veg (tomatoes, cucumber etc.), chit potatoes, plant garlic and onions

March: Sow root veg, and salad leaves outside and cover in case of frost. Weeding is an on-going task to keep up!

April: Plant potatoes into deep drills or containers and remember to water and feed your plants

May: This is a perfect time to plant containers, hanging baskets and borders with any additional plants or pollinator flowers. Remember to weed often!

June: First early potatoes can be harvested, along with salad leaves and herbs. Continue to sow and plant root vegetables and salad leaves

July: Temperatures are higher this month so make sure your plants have enough water. Carrots need less water than you think! Deadhead flowers, and water hanging baskets daily. Feed your veg plants with a liquid fertilizer

August: Keep up all garden tasks! It's almost time to enjoy the fruits of your labour before Autumn sets in.

September: Harvest any and fruits left over and think about how you can preserve them! Now is a great time to plant bulbs for next years Spring veg

October: Now is time to prepare for Winter. Plant spring bulbs, bring inside garden furniture and tools, remove fallen leaves from ponds, harvest and preserve and store any remainder vegetables and fruits

November: Root vegetables like parsnips, carrots, beetroot can be kept in the ground and harvested when needed, use prepare food for wild birds, and use frost fleeces to mind plants during the frost

December: Harvest the last of your root vegetables, mulch plants and protect against frost. Plan your garden for the year to come!



Community Garden Locations

Connect your group with an established community garden!

No matter your age, skills or ability there's a job for you at the community garden.

This takes out a lot of the work with setting up your own one, plus you can make friends and learn new skills!

Have you heard of **Citizen Science**? This idea means that each of us can identify data in our communities that help us all understand the local effects from global challenges like climate change, invasive alien species and biodiversity loss.

Check out Community Gardens Ireland to find your local garden! <http://cgireland.org/>



Seedlings love small containers!

- Beetroot, carrots and onions all love to be transported to containers once they are big enough. Reuse cardboard from toilet rolls and kitchen rolls or plastic from bottles and yoghurt tubs!



Potatoes LOVE containers! (and aren't afraid of the dark)



Recycled boxes



Reuse produce sacks

Strawberries love height and growing down!
Old tube with cut-outs for the strawberries to grow out
Upcycled birdfeeder into a planter
Reused tins with strings for strawberries to hang

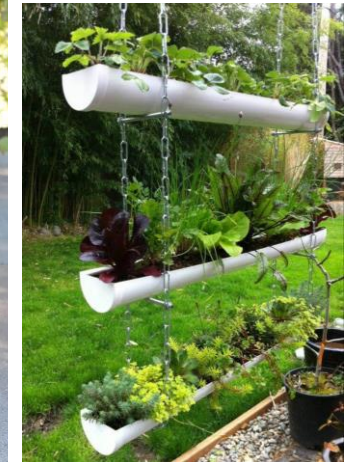


Beetroot and Carrots love depth and space to grow down!
- find any 12-inch or 14-inches deep container



Creative Containers

Put your skills to the test and create cool containers to plant in!



Creating your own containers helps reduce waste....



And saves you money!



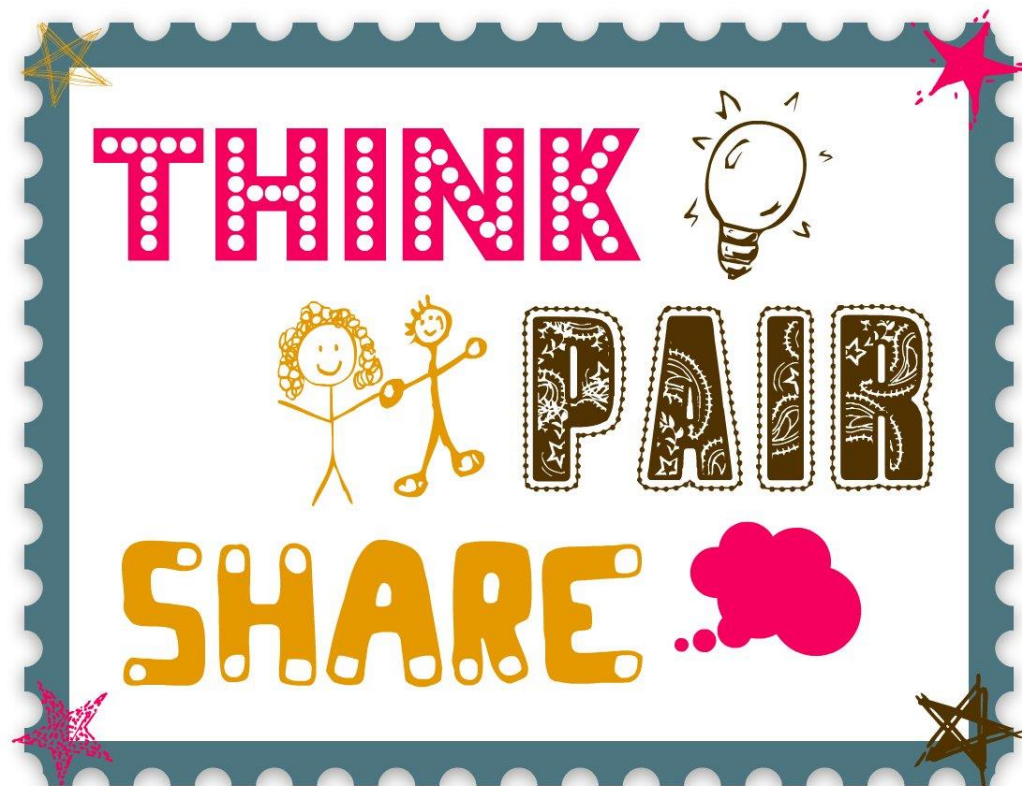
Exchange ideas!

Have you ever heard of:

- Keyhole gardens?
- Plastic bottle greenhouses?
- Companion planting?
- Lasagna gardening?
- Permaculture?

Start a **conversation** with your local community garden to find out their practices.

They might be interested in working with you and your group on your suggestions!



African Keyhole Gardening

Why is this a good idea?

- Ideal for areas with bad soil quality
- Accessible for users with different mobility
- Cheap to construct
- Integrated way to manage compost

Did you know?

The African keyhole garden was designed by CARE in Zimbabwe during the mid 1990s to encourage people to grow their own food. The design relied on materials that were close at hand—such as bricks, stones, branches, hay, ashes, manure and soil—to create an easy-care garden for disabled people. This idea was developed in Lesotho and are well adapted to dry arid lands and deserts. In Africa, they are positioned close to the kitchen and used to raise leafy greens such as lettuce, kale, and spinach; herbs; and root crops such as onions, garlic, carrots, and beets.



Create your own African Keyhole garden!



Inspiration from ancient culture

Did you know?

Lima, Peru's desert capital, a city of 12 million people, expects to run out of water by 2025. It already faces a crisis each summer as the supply from the mountains dwindles to a trickle. Yet the quantity of rain in the wet season can be overwhelming.

The good news!

A group of scientists has found that reviving systems developed 1,400 years ago by local people before the Inca empire existed could harvest water from the winter rainy season in the mountains to ensure Lima's summer supplies.



Slow Water Movement

Slowing down our consumption of water is a great way to be kind to nature. Plus it will be cheaper long-term if you can save and harvest water too!

Find out more here!
<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20210510-peru-urgent-search-for-slow-water>

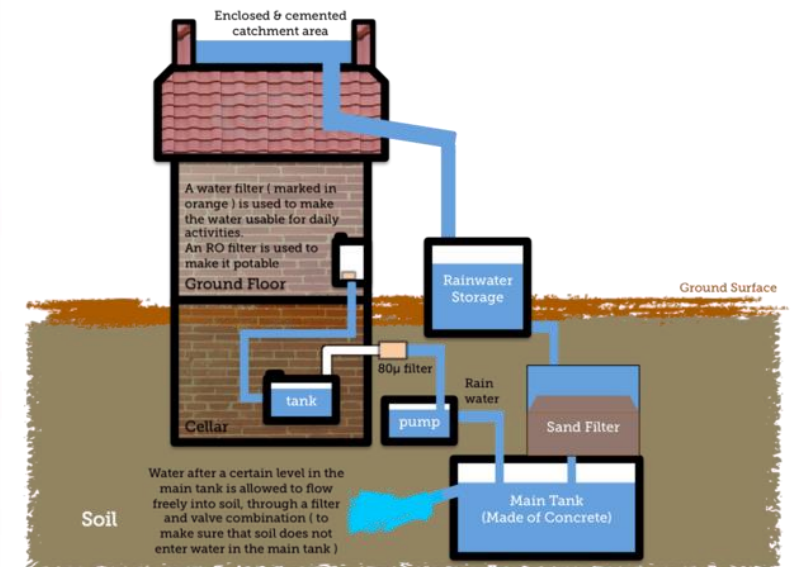


This is an outdoor tunnel called 'Qullqa'. They were constructed across the Inca Empire during 15th Century A.D. It was used for food preservation of dried potatoes and root vegetables, covered with straw and baled

A 1,400-year-old Peruvian water-diverting method could supply up to 40,000 Olympic-size swimming pools' worth of water to present-day Lima each year!



How can you join the slow water movement?



Share your story!

Share your gardening story to **inspire** others to act too! Community and nature are essential for our collective wellbeing. We can only make the world a better place, together.

Scan the QR code to
Share your story!

