

## How to Save the Planet (and yourself)

GIY stands for *grow it yourself* and is about a new fashion for growing your own food.

There are a lot of reasons why growing your own food is a good idea. GIY cuts down your carbon footprint. Your carbon footprint is the quantity of carbon dioxide gas, or CO<sub>2</sub>, you make go into the atmosphere. Too much CO<sub>2</sub> causes global warming and climate change. Food in supermarkets travels a long way in ships and lorries which produce a lot of CO<sub>2</sub>. When you buy food from a supermarket, you need to ask, "How many food miles does it have?"

Also, buying vegetables grown in heated greenhouses increase your carbon footprint a lot. If you buy as much food as you can in season from your region, you help save the planet. If you grow as many vegetables as you can at home, then you are helping a lot more because you use a lot less water.

Vegetables you grow yourself are also good for your body because they contain a lot more minerals, nutrients and antioxidants than supermarket vegetables and they don't contain any chemicals such as fungicides, insecticides or chemical fertilizers either. Your vegetables are also the freshest and the tastiest you can get. If you GIY, you learn a lot about plants and farming and it can be very useful for teaching children about nature and where food comes from too.

How much money can you save? To begin with, seeds are a lot cheaper to buy than vegetables. Then, there are two ways to save even more. Firstly, plant the most expensive vegetables such as leeks. Secondly, plant the most productive. One courgette plant produces so many courgettes that you can give a lot of them to friends and neighbours, which makes you very popular. Cucumbers, green beans, peas, raspberries, strawberries and of course tomatoes are great too and they are all very easy to grow. Herbs are expensive to buy so you can never grow too much basil, mint, parsley, rosemary or thyme. Experts say it is best to buy cheap vegetables like onions and potatoes directly from local farmers.

Don't worry if you don't have much space. To GIY, you don't even need a garden. You can use pots on your balcony for growing aubergines, broad beans, peppers and tomatoes. What's more, don't worry if your space doesn't get much sun. In that case you can plant endives, lettuce, peas, radicchio and spinach.

Basically, growing your own vegetables is a win-win situation. You are richer, you have a healthier planet, a healthier social life and a healthier body and mind.

437 words

