

Growing Courgettes



grow
your own grub

Summer/Autumn vegetable



image sourced from www.thinkvegetables.co.uk

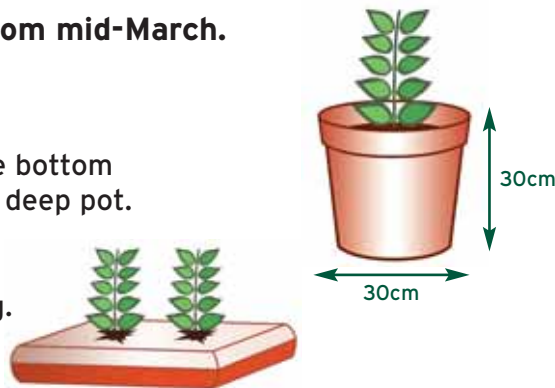
*'tasty food
from tiny spaces'*

Courgettes are tasty baby marrows and some varieties are good for growing in small spaces like balconies.

You can start growing courgettes from mid-March.

You can grow them in:

- Pots or any container with holes in the bottom
- 1 plant to each 30cm wide and 30cm deep pot.
- Grow bags - 2 plants to each grow bag.



When you are buying courgette seeds have a look for 'trailing' varieties such as 'little gem' or 'long green trailing' which will grow in pots and climb up poles or wires so they are good for growing up balcony railings to save space.

Courgettes will need some sun during the day and some protection from strong winds.

Sowing Seeds

You can plant your seeds from mid-March. The seeds will need to be grown in a small pot inside your house before moving to a bigger pot outside. Each courgette seed will need an 8cm pot. Using peat free multipurpose compost sow each seed on its side 3cm below the soil. Keep the pots indoors on a windowsill and keep the soil moist with water. Keep the pots on a tray to stop water spills. Make a label with the name of the plant on it and the date that you planted them.

When your plants have four leaves or more they are ready to move into bigger containers outside. Check weather reports to make sure that there won't be any more frosts before you move them (usually May/June).

Transplanting (moving your plants outside)

- Take your plants outside and water them well. Turn the pots upside down and gently squeeze the bottom of the pot to ease the compost and plant out of the pot. You should see the roots of the plant holding the compost together.
- Fill your pot with soil or cut 2 holes in your grow bag and make a hole in the soil big enough for the plant.
- Carefully place the plant in the hole and fill with soil so that the roots are covered. Press the soil down around the plant and give it some water. (continued overleaf)

Transplanting (moving your plants outside)

- Take your plants outside and water them well. Turn each pot upside down and gently squeeze the bottom of the pot to ease out the compost and plant. You should see the roots of the plant holding the compost together.
- Fill your pot or hanging basket with soil or cut 3 holes in your grow bag and make a hole in the soil big enough for the tomato plant.
- Carefully place the tomato plant in the hole and fill with soil so that the roots are covered. Press the soil down around the plant and give it some water.

Water your plants enough so that the soil is always moist especially in hot weather.

It is best to follow instructions on your seed packet to find out if your plants need any special care - plants in pots and grow bags will need to be gently tied to a stick to support them. You may need to 'pinch out' (snip off with scissors) side shoots that don't have flowers on. Cut off any leaves that turn yellow.

Your tomatoes should be ready about 16 - 22 weeks after sowing.

Harvesting

When your tomatoes have turned red they are ready to eat!

Snip the tomatoes off at the stem and keep them in a cool and dry place (but not in the fridge). They are best eaten soon after they are picked before they go too soft.

Eating Tomatoes

In season June - October



**1 medium or 7 small (cherry) or
2 whole tinned tomatoes count
as 1 portion.**

Just Eat More
(fruit & veg)

Preparation

Wash and remove stalk then cut into chunks or slices or eat small tomatoes whole.

How can I use my tomatoes?

Tomatoes can be eaten uncooked in salads and sandwiches or cooked to make soups and sauces for rice or pasta dishes.

Salsa**Ingredients**

- 4 tomatoes, washed and chopped
- 1 small onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 celery sticks, washed and chopped
- ½ carrot for colour and crunch, peeled and chopped
- A pinch of hot chilli powder or ½ a fresh chilli to taste
- 6 dessertspoons lemon or lime juice
- Chopped fresh or dried parsley or coriander

Method

1. Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl and serve.

Serve:

As a dip with raw vegetables such as carrot, cucumber, peppers, broccoli, celery and radishes, as part of a filling for pitta wraps or sandwiches or with oven-baked potato wedges.

Growing Strawberries



Summer fruit

grow
your own grub



*'tasty food
from tiny spaces'*

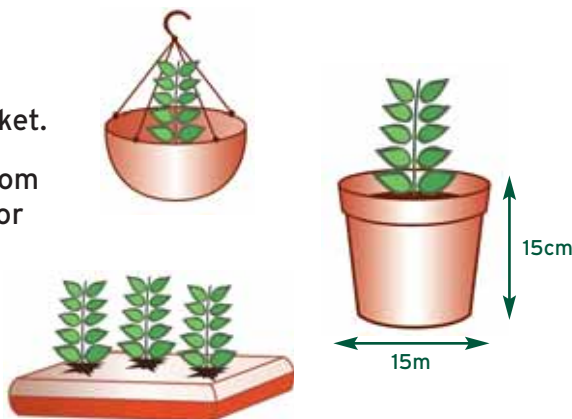
Strawberries are a great fruit to grow at home and are easy plants to look after.

The easiest way to start growing strawberries is to buy young plants from a plant nursery in late spring/early summer. There are different varieties of plants so follow instructions that come with the plant.

You can plant strawberries from late June to September - check the label on your plants.

You can grow them in:

- Hanging baskets - up to 5 plants in one basket.
- Pots or any container with holes in the bottom - 1 plant to a 15cm wide and 15cm deep pot or 2/3 in a bigger pot.
- Grow bags - 3 or 4 plants to 1 grow bag.



Transplanting (moving your plants to bigger containers)

You will need some soil to plant your strawberries in - peat free multi-purpose compost is best.

- Take your plants outside and water them well. Turn the pots upside down and gently squeeze the bottom of the pot to ease the compost and plant out of the pot. You should see the roots of the plant holding the compost together.
- Fill your pot or hanging basket with soil or cut 3 or 4 holes in your grow bag and make holes in the soil big enough for each plant.
- Carefully place the plant in the hole and fill with soil so that the roots are covered. Press the soil down around the plant and give it some water.

Your plants will be happiest in a sunny place but will be OK in shade for part of the day.

Water your plants enough so that the soil is always moist especially in hot weather.

When the berries start to grow make sure they don't touch the ground or the soil - rest them on cardboard while they grow.

Watch out for birds! You may need to cover the plants with a net to keep birds from eating your fruit. (continued overleaf)

Your plants will keep producing fruit for 2 or 3 years. Every year the plants will make 'runners' (new plants that grow out on stalks). You will be able to plant these runners to replace your old plants every couple of years.

Harvesting

Your strawberries are ready to eat as soon as they turn red. Gently cut the strawberry from its stalk with some scissors.

Strawberries will not keep well so eat them the same day that you pick them.

For more detailed information about growing strawberries see the BBC's gardening website.

Eating Strawberries



In season June - October



7 Strawberries count as 1 portion.

Just Eat More
(fruit & veg)

Preparation

- Remove stalks
- Wash

How can I use my strawberries?

Strawberries are great eaten on their own or with yoghurt. If you have a blender try these recipes:

Strawberry Smoothie

makes enough for 1 large glass or 2 small glasses

You will need:

- 4 - 6 strawberries
- 1 small tub strawberry yoghurt
- 1 cup milk

Method

1. Put all the ingredients in a blender and mix for 30 seconds and serve.

Strawberry Milkshake

makes enough for 1 large glass or 2 small glasses

You will need:

- 8 strawberries
- 2 cups milk

Method

1. Put all the ingredients in a blender and mix for 30 seconds and serve.

