



emma's HINTS & tips



Do your bit!

I feel the focus this year in the garden is directed at vegetables. As we feel the credit crunch and are responding to media reports that we should look after our pennies going back to basics to growing our own produce is becoming very popular and this trend may well remain even after the credit crunch passes.

There is something very special about eating something you have nurtured for a couple of months and picked just half an hour before eating.

Freshly picked vegetables laying on a plate in front of you can be a little overwhelming. You may feel a little hesitation at first before tucking into your dinner and reminding yourself of the cold damp day you sowed the seeds, the endless hours of watering and the slugs and pigeons you successfully fended off, before you place your fork of homegrown, fresh vegetables into your mouth. The flavour is overwhelming, like nothing on the shelves in the supermarkets (even the organic grown vegetables), making all the time and effort so very worthwhile.

Apart from the satisfaction and taste of growing your vegetables, long term we all have to look to the carbon foot-print on the produce available to us on the shelves in the supermarkets. Purchasing fruit that is shipped over from New Zealand and South Africa has an impact on our environment as does purchasing produce 'out of season' fruit which I feel, is tasteless!

I would recommend if you wish to have a go at growing something for the summer months start with tomatoes in a growbag, these are so easy and great for kids. All fruit and vegetables require an open, but sheltered aspect and water, plenty of water.

Compost from growbags is great, but does a tendency to dry out easily. If possible try to keep the pot of the compost in some shade, while the fruit or vegetable is in the sun, hard I know, but pots grouped together work well.

Another good tip is to use rain water when possible as it is softer than our hard tap water. Yet any water is better than none and if you add a tiny drip of washing up liquid in your watering can of tap water this aids as a water softener and the compost absorbs this a lot quicker rather than running straight off.

Happy growing and happy eating!

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