Food and Climate Change

Community Food Growing Toolkit

Winchester Food Partnership

SUSTAINABLE FOOD places

COMMUNITY FUND

Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION

WinACC



Community Food Growing

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The aim of this Toolkit is to:

- ★ **Encourage you to think about whether you could get involved with or create a community food growing space.**
- ★ **Explain the importance of community food growing in relation to reducing our carbon footprints and combating climate change.**
- ★ **Share links 🔗 to useful information/organisations.**
- ★ **Highlight examples of existing projects.**
- ★ **Give a brief overview of how to start a community food growing project.**



What is a community food growing space?

A space to grow food



Perhaps as one community plot, or split into individual plots. It could be urban, suburban or rural.

A collection of pots and planters, raised beds, an allotment, a larger community orchard or a community garden/farm project with more facilities.



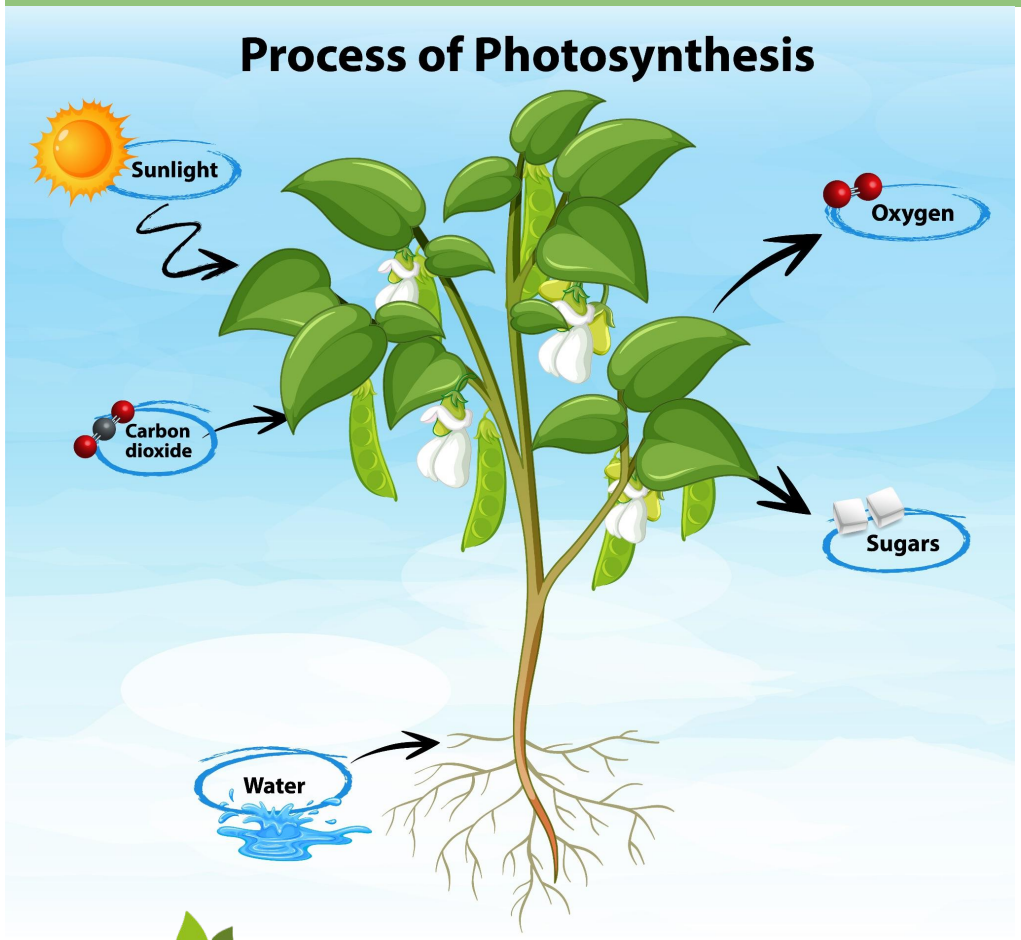
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People are encouraged to work together, sharing and learning skills. Any produce grown is split between the volunteers helping with the project and/or shared with the local community.

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Why are community growing spaces important?

The Basics - plants for life



It's easy to forget that plants are essential to life. Using photosynthesis, all plants sequester (capture and store) carbon dioxide by absorbing it from our atmosphere. This effectively locks up greenhouse gas keeping them out of the atmosphere.

Carbon Dioxide (CO2) is one of the main greenhouse gases contributing to climate change. increasing growing plants and trees helps combat climate change and improves the environment.

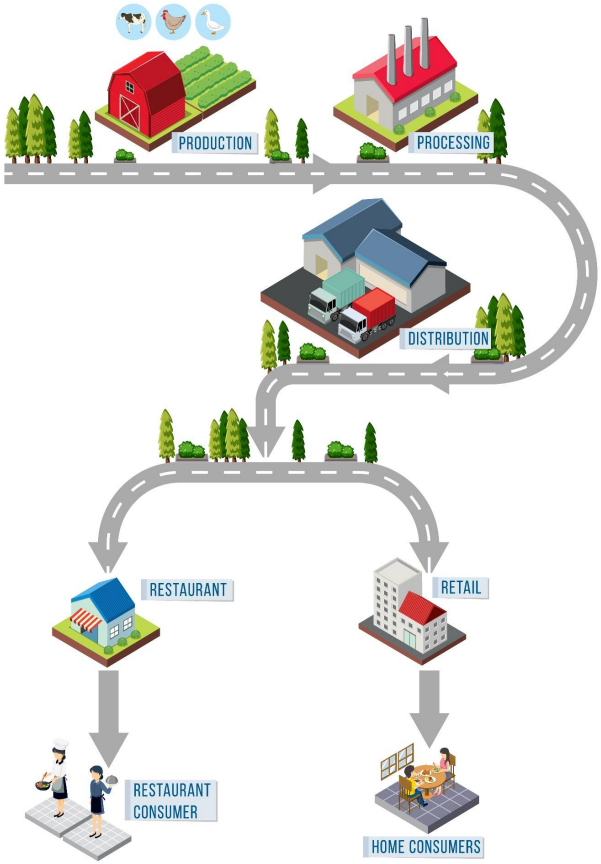
🔗https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2018/04/why-plants-are-important/

In addition to creating oxygen and reducing air pollution, plants create habitats, medicine, fuel, textiles and food.

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Why are community growing spaces important?

Food & climate change are connected



How we source our food and what we eat is one of the most effective ways in which we can all reduce our impact on the planet.

The food we buy is sown, grown, watered, fertilised, harvested, processed, packaged, transported and stored. Each step is energy intensive and it's estimated that 🔗 between 25-30% of global greenhouse gas emissions come from the food system.

Have you ever thought about what your carbon 'foodprint' is?

Try FLOOP

🔗 Floop App

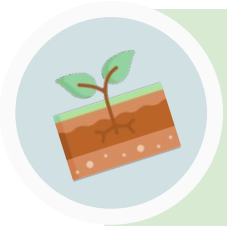
This app calculates the carbon footprint of food and gives some recipe suggestions for more sustainable meals.

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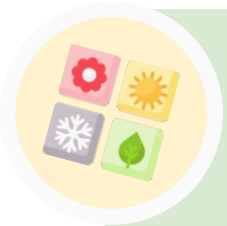
How does community food growing benefit our planet?

It's kinder to the planet and helps reduce our carbon 'foodprints'
It Is estimated every hectare of allotment space saves 34 tonnes of CO2

By creating and using hyper-local, community food growing projects we can:

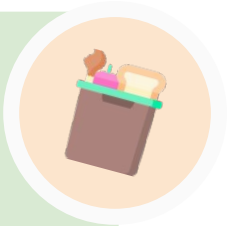


Raise awareness of the importance of our soil and plants in sequestering carbon.



Promote eating seasonally.
Reducing reliance on imported or heated greenhouse grown food.

Reduce food waste.
We're less likely to waste food that we've put time and resources in to growing.



🔗Growing fruit and veg at home is good for health, sustainability, and resilience

It may also be possible to set up a community composting scheme and/or encourage individuals to compost their inedible 🔗food waste.

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How does community food growing benefit our planet?

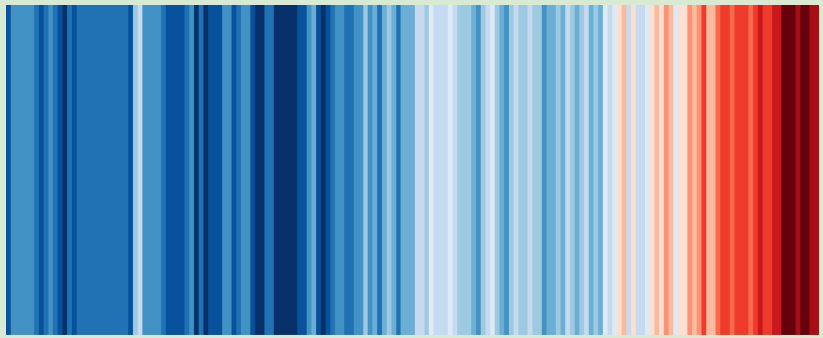
Learn and teach how to sustainably grow and harvest food.

Enable access to locally grown food. Reducing food miles to food metres dramatically cuts transport emissions.

Make food grown without pesticides more accessible.
Benefitting soil, air quality, biodiversity and us..

Increase food resilience.
As our climate warms there are likely to be problems in the food supply chain. Creating access to food locally could lessen this impact.

[UK could grow 40% of its fruit and veg in towns and cities, cutting dependence on imports, study says]



Global climate warming: 1850-2022

[How much warmer is our climate?]

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How does community food growing benefit our planet?

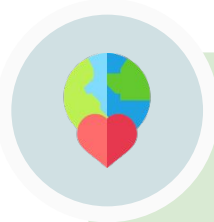


Contribute to nature recovery and improve biodiversity.



Share how to prepare and cook food sustainably.

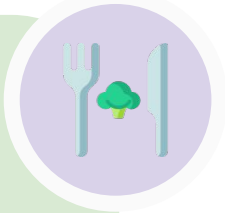
🔗 Eco-friendly - BBC Food



Encourage a greener and more environmentally minded community.

Reduce plastic packaging.





Encourage a more
🔗 **plant-based diet**

Research shows that beef, lamb, shellfish and cheese have the highest carbon emissions whilst fruit, vegetables and nuts have the lowest.

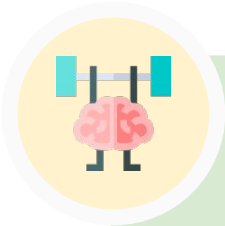
Better and less meat and dairy is a 'Healthy Diet for a Healthier Planet'

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How else can community food growing benefit us?

Other Benefits



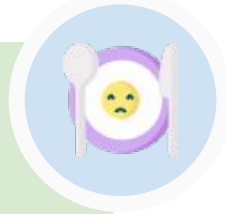
Improve physical and mental health.
Gardening has been shown to improve physical and mental health and build social connections.



Make growing healthy and nutritious food accessible to everyone regardless of skills, time, money, ability or space.



Foster a greater understanding of where food comes from and how it's grown.



Could play an important part in reducing food insecurity.



Increase the amount of fruit and vegetables consumed.
Most of us will be more enthusiastic about produce we've grown ourselves.
It's a great way try new food – especially if we've been involved in growing and picking it.

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Where could community growing take place?

Examples of local community gardening projects



There are lots of successful community growing projects in the Winchester District

- **Parish Council/City Council land**
  There may be existing space in an allotment.
  Incredible Edible Winchester have allotments at Edington Road and planters around the city.
- **Schools/Pre-Schools**
  Olivers Battery Primary
  Eco Schools Barton Farm
  https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/schools
- **Universities/Colleges**
  Winchester University allotment
- **Care Homes**
- **Private Land**
  South Wonston Sustainability
- **Community Centres/Village Halls**
- **Social Enterprise and business**
  Unit 12 CIC,
  Wild Hive Collective,
  Highbridge Farm
- **Shared Garden schemes**
  Lend and Tend
  Alresford's lend and tend garden sharing scheme
- **Places of worship**



Working with what you have access to can be a great start. It might not be perfect but hopefully will grow to bigger things! Good to Grow and Incredible Edible are good sources to see what's happening nearby. We need more community growing and most voluntary groups need more help both physically and financially.

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Tips to get started



Every community and every plot is different. But you will need:

- **Health and Safety**. You will need to do a risk assessment and update it regularly.
- 🔗Health and safety for community growing projects | Social Farms & Gardens
- 🔗General Risk Assessment example – not for use
- **Funding** 🔗Winchester City and 🔗Hampshire County Councils, Parish Councils often have grants available.
  Hampshire Forest Parnership - Community Orchards
  The 🔗RHS have some really good links for fundraising ideas.



Research the space and find out what skills people can offer.
Some ideas to consider are:

- Make sure you have permission from the landowner.
- Who is your project aimed at and how will you get volunteers?
- What facilities are available?
- Who is going to help you set up and run your community garden? Do you need to 🔗draft a constitution?
- Is the space accessible to everyone?



Set up some basic rules of how things will work: e.g. what you intend to grow, using what methods and how/to whom you will distribute any produce.

The 🔗Royal Horticultural Society and 🔗Incredible Edible Network have some good free online resources.

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Setting up your growing space

Make a plan
What are you going to grow and where? How will you rotate what you're growing to keep your soil and plants healthy?



What equipment is needed?
What tools are needed and where they can be stored?

Have a first aid kit available





Somewhere to sit and rest
is a good addition.

Think about ways of making your growing areas accessible to all



Find ways of capturing and storing rainwater

Can you provide toilet facilities?
If mains toilets are not a possibility and you have the space could you provide a composting toilet?





For tools that need charging can you install a source of renewable energy?

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Use sustainable gardening practices



Be organic
Don't use pesticides or chemical fertilisers



Learn about permaculture and its principles:
Earth Care, People Care, Fair Share

Water plants responsibly

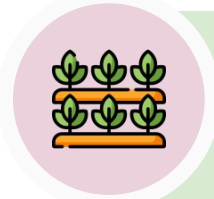


Save seeds
For planting next year





Practice 🔗no dig for the health of your soil



Plant according to soil type and area
The right plants in the right place will be happier and need less maintenance

Don't use peat
and 🔗Make your own compost



No plastic
Find alternatives to plastic and plastic membrane



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Remember the Buyerarchy of Needs!

Avoid buying new

This should be a last resort!
Of course, sometimes it's necessary. But avoiding it is the best way of reducing your carbon footprint.

Is there a Library of Things or a hire shop nearby?
This can be a cost effective for items that aren't used often. Local libraries are useful for gardening books and magazines.

…or what someone else is willing to donate!
There are some amazing free and buy nothing groups locally, online. E.g. Freecycle, Gumtree, Facebook Market Place and I need a Whisk.
Put a request on community pages, newsletter and noticeboards. Gardeners are often willing to have a dig around in their sheds and share any duplicate tools they might have. Waterbutts, compost bins, wheelbarrows can often be found for free.



Compost, bug hotels, plant labels, decorations all can be made.
If you have a Community or Men's Shed nearby they may be willing to make certain items for you for reasonable donation/fee.

There are lots of ways to source preloved items.
If an item is electrical make sure it has been PAT tested for safety. Check out local charity shops, Gumtree, Facebook Market Place, Ebay. Some Gardening clubs hold plant and equipment sales.

Seeds. seedlings, plants,compost, pots, produce, even time!

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Parish Councils & Community Groups

A Parish Council can create impactful change by:

Community Growing

- Provide land/spaces in your local plan.
- Develop edible landscaping in your parish
- Assist with funding
- Champion the importance of community food growing.

Broader initiatives

- Create a parish climate and nature strategy?
- Declare a Climate Emergency?
  🔗National Association of Local Councils - Climate Change
- Sign up to the Planet Pledge
  🔗Take the Planet Pledge

Further Information:

🔗National Association of Local Councils - Climate Change
🔗Every Mouthful Counts toolkit for Local Authorities | Food for the Planet
🔗https://www.glasgowdeclaration.org/
🔗 Transform food planning in your area

Find support for taking action against climate change in your parish

Join WeCAN

🔗Winchester Climate Action Network – a network of local communities taking action on the climate

Could you set up a community growing space?

A planter, an allotment, a community orchard?



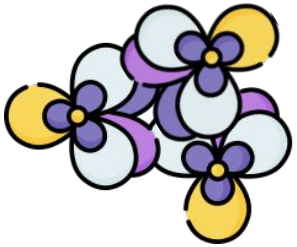
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What's Next?



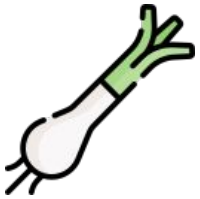






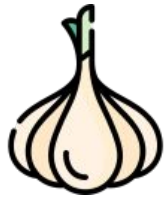
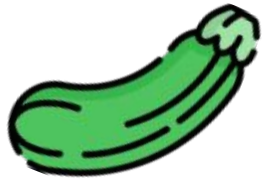
Soon you'll be growing lots of amazing edible plants and flowers!

- **Register a community garden with [Good to Grow],**
  If you choose to sign-up (free), you'll have access to their Harvestometer an online tool to 'help growers keep track of how much food they grow, how much money they save, and how much carbon they save compared to buying produce from the supermarket.
- **Plan what to do with any surplus food that you grow.**
- **Research how to increase your yield**
  by downloading Sustain's Grow More Food publication.








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Want to learn more?

Useful links

- The Climate Change Gardeners Pack
- 10 ways to be more sustainable in your garden
- How To Save Your Own Seed at Home
- Sustain
- Benefits of community growing.

FIlms

- The Need To GROW
- The Biggest Little Farm
- Kiss The Ground

Book List (Check out Hampshire Libraries)

How to Garden the Low Carbon Way - Sally Nex

Allotment Month by Month - Alan Buckingham

Eco Gardening for Everyone - Burgeon & Ball

The Green Gardening Handbook - Nancy Birtwhistle

2040 A Handbook for the Regeneration - Damon Gameau

No-Waste Kitchen Gardening - Katie Elzer-Peters

How Bad are Bananas? The Carbon Footprint of Everything - Mike Berners Lee

- **The Right To Grow** An Incredible Edible campaign to change the rules and give people the chance to grow food on public land.

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This is the first edition of our Community Food Growing Toolkit.



We'd love to hear your feedback.

Please email gfm@winchesterfoodpartnership.org.uk

Let's keep learning, sharing our knowledge and eating what we grow!

Coming soon - toolkits on, sharing surplus food and reducing food waste

Our Good Food Movement aims to emphasise the contribution that food choices make to our environmental footprint.

It is part of the Winchester Climate Action Network (WeCAN) which is a WinACC project looking to engage Parish Councils and community groups.

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Winchester Food Partnership takes no responsibility for the content in the external web pages included in this toolkit. The appearance of an organisation in this toolkit does not imply that they have endorsed the entire toolkit and we acknowledge there are many organisations with expertise in this area.

