

Get started with Grow With It

Support for community groups



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What is RHS Grow With It?

RHS Grow With It is an annual programme designed to get more people growing. This year, we're asking you to see potential in the spaces around you to sow a **small space with BIG impact**:

- For people – bring people together through plants
- For pollinators – learn how to encourage and support wildlife with your plant choices
- For planet – build climate resilience by greening your neighbourhood



This guide will help you consider some key questions to plan your small space together:

- Who is this space for? Where are you going to grow?
- What can plants do to help us? What do you want to grow?
- How will you share it or help others to enjoy it?



Getting started

The first step to planning a new planted space, no matter how small, is to look at what you already have. Do you have any of these spaces available?

A window box,
or space to add
one

Pots or
containers

A balcony

Cracks or gaps –
between paving
or in walls

An alleyway

A doorstep

A bare patch of
ground

If you'd like to add a planter, container or pot, where can it go?

You may already have lots of things that can be turned into containers so there's no need to buy pots – for example jam jars, plastic food trays, pots or bottles

Getting started



Is the space in
shade or in sun?



Is it sheltered or
exposed?



Do you have access
to water for
watering your
plants?



What is the ground
like? Do you have
soil to grow in, or
do you need to
grow in
containers?



Are there any
plants growing
around your space
already?
Can you identify
them?


What do we want from our space?

Together, think about and discuss what you'd like your space to do. Who will it be for? What do you want it to bring to your community? What do you want it to look and feel like?

You could collect ideas by:

- Creating a group mindmap on a large sheet of paper or whiteboard
- Noting ideas down on sticky notes
- Drawing or sketching what you want your space to be
- Using materials such as fuzzy felt, Lego or modelling materials to create a visual idea of your space
- Taking a look at plants growing in your local area that you'd like to replicate

The following pages will introduce some of the different things plants can do for us, which could help guide your ideas.



Plants for wellbeing

You might want to create a green space for people to relax in and connect with nature. This is because:

- Spending time with plants can reduce our blood pressure and pulse rate
- Soil contains billions of microorganisms that can help to boost our mood
- Science shows that looking at the repetitive patterns in nature can reduce stress levels
- Patients with a natural view can heal faster and need fewer analgesics than those with a view of a brick wall
- Different sensory qualities of plants such as texture, colour and scent can provide relaxing and soothing environments



Plants for the environment

Depending on your local environment and the types of plants you choose, green spaces can help to boost biodiversity, improve air quality and combat pollution.

- Certain plants can encourage biodiversity, such as attracting pollinating insects including bees, hoverflies and butterflies. Once your plants are in flower, you can count the number of pollinators to see the impact you are making
- Improve air quality, by trapping particulate pollution
- Reduce urban heating in summer



Plants for food

Growing edible plants can provide a variety of seasonal food, from herbs to fruit and vegetables.

- Fruit
- Herbs
- Vegetables
- Salads
- Plants with medicinal qualities such as mint or chamomile
- Edible flowers

This pot is planted with the ingredients for a green risotto: tomato, broad bean, runner bean, rosemary, thyme, garlic chives, shallots, basil, pea, courgette, nasturtium



Plants in public spaces

If you don't have access to a garden of your own, you might want to consider what you could do to improve or create other spaces in your local area. To encourage others to take action to improve their local environment and improve our neighbourhoods, you could try:

- Identifying wild plants and 'weeds' already growing, and adding labels to them to encourage passers-by to notice and appreciate them
- Making seed balls by mixing seeds with compost and clay, which can be thrown or broken up
- Assessing existing beds, verges or areas of bare ground that could be planted in
- Remember to find out who the landowners are and seek permission if you plan on planting your seeds in a public place, e.g. from your local council (see link below for more guidance)

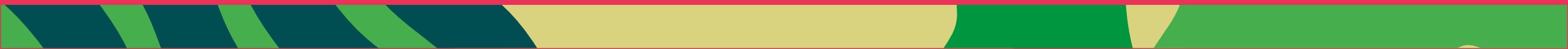
[You can find more guidance on guerrilla gardening on the RHS website here](#)



Deciding what to plant and where

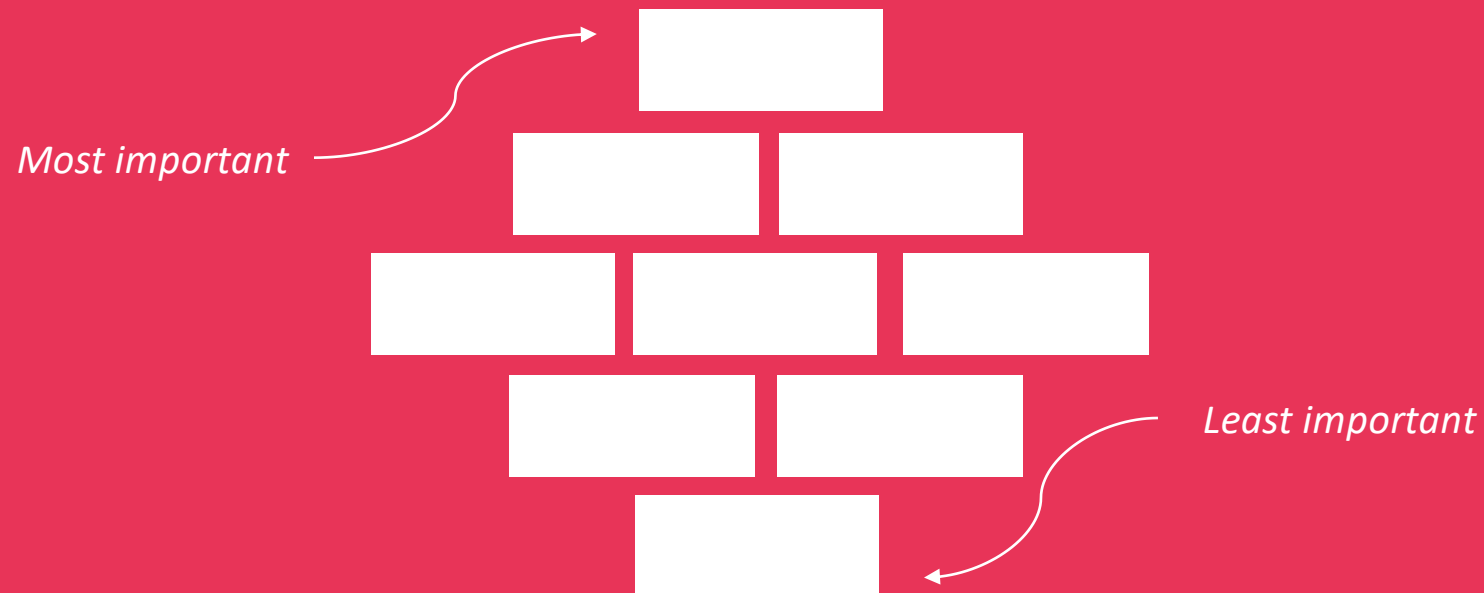
After coming up with ideas as a group, do any stand out? Have any words or thoughts appeared more than others? You might have lots of different ideas and opinions in your group, so the next step is to narrow them down.

You could do this by...



Deciding what to plant and where

- **Voting on your favourite ideas** – ask everyone to use stickers or slips of paper to vote on their top three ideas from the mindmapping and discussion
- **Diamond ranking** – this is a popular tool to discuss and explore what ideas and concepts are most important to you as a group. It involves ordering your ideas (on post-it notes or sheets of paper) from most important to least important (or ‘highest priority’ to ‘lowest priority’), in a diamond shape



Deciding what to plant and where

- **Effort/impact matrix** – this format encourages you to consider the effort required to make something happen, as well as the impact it could have if achieved. This helps you to sort ideas into what might be worth doing, and what could be saved for another time or project



How can everyone contribute?

- What **time and capacity** do you have available to make this plan a reality? How many people can help? How often can you help? Can you get support from other people or organisations nearby?
- Everyone in your group will have **different skills and interests** they can contribute to creating and maintaining your new space. Use the template on the next page to assign different roles based on everyone's interests.
- How can you let people know what you are doing and **encourage others to get involved** or enjoy your small space? Can you share updates on social media or through a newsletter? Can you make leaflets or posters? Can you create labels or signage that help your space stand out, and invite people to spend time in it?

[illegible]

Next steps

Once you've decided what you'd like your space to become, what's next?

First, gather the tools and materials you need:

- ✓ Compost
- ✓ Seeds
- ✓ Pots, containers, or materials that can be upcycled or turned into one!
- ✓ Gardening tools and gloves
- ✓ Materials to create plant labels or signage
- ✓ Watering cans and access to water



Next steps

The RHS has lots of support available to help you get started, so take a look at these:

Selecting plants

- [Find a plant tool](#)
- [Sustainable planting combinations](#)
- [Plants for places](#)
- [Plants for pollinators](#)

Sowing and growing

- [Growing plants in containers](#)
- [Herbs in containers](#)
- [Fruit in containers](#)
- [How to grow annual flowers](#)

Building and making

- [How to build a planter \(video guide\)](#)
- [How to make a raised bed](#)
- [Make super plant labels](#)
- [Make wooden signs and labels](#)



Next steps

- **Sow your small space!** Once you have gathered what you need and prepared your space, get sowing! We're inviting everyone involved in RHS Grow With It to come together and sow their small space between 24 March – 6 April. We'll provide handy resources for sowing your seeds so that you can get your plants off to a great start
- **Plot your space on our Grow With It map!** [Use this simple form](#) to submit your small but mighty space to our online map. You'll be able to see small green spaces popping up all over the country at rhs.org.uk/growwithit
- **Keep an eye on your emails** for handy guidance, tips and inspiration every month to help you look after and get the most from your space