

Let's Get Growing!

This extract is from a gardening book for children by garden writer Lia Leendertz and children's television gardener Chris Collins, who has appeared on *Blue Peter*. In this extract, the authors write about how to get involved in gardening and the benefits that gardening can bring.

Let's get growing!

On a sunny spring morning, I cannot wait to get outside and check the seedlings that I planted a few days before. It's so exciting!

Whether you plant one special sunflower or a whole plot of vegetables, seeing things grow is one of the real wonders of life.

What if I haven't got a garden?

You don't need masses of space or even a garden to be a great gardener – a window-box can give you fresh herbs for pizzas, pasta, salads and sandwiches. Why not try growing a strawberry fountain or use a hanging basket to grow tomatoes? They are great fun to grow and things you pick from your own plants are going to be fresher and far more tasty than anything you can buy in the shops. There is nothing like it. Remember though, give your plants a little bit of your time every day – don't forget to feed, water and give your plants lots of love.

Be a wildlife warrior

When you dig a piece of ground or turn over the soil to take out weeds and stones, it's great fun to watch how many birds you attract to your veg plot. Bees, butterflies, and other helpful insects can be encouraged to visit your garden by planting certain flowers. In turn, these insects will help your plants to grow by spreading pollen and seeds and eating pests. If you work with wildlife, they will do a lot of the work for you.

So now you're a gardener

As you pick your first fruit and veg, you will see what fun it is to grow things. Everyone loves to be given great things to eat, but don't forget that you can give away some of your baby plants as well – in that way even more people can have fun gardening. Being a gardener will keep you and your friends busy, happy and well fed and there's no better way to enjoy the great world outdoors.

An extract from *Grow Your Own for Kids* by Chris Collins and Lia Leendertz.