



**Making Everything Easier!™**

# **Growing Your Own Fruit & Veg**

FOR

# **DUMMIES®**

## **Learn to:**

- Create a thriving vegetable patch, however large or small your plot
- Plan your planting calendar to enjoy delicious crops all year round
- Cultivate and harvest your fruit and vegetables
- Grow organically

**Geoff Stebbings**

*Gardening writer, editor and broadcaster*



# Growing Your Own Fruit & Veg For Dummies®

## Table of Contents

### [Introduction](#)

[About This Book](#)

[Conventions Used in This Book](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[How This Book Is Organised](#)

[Part I: Getting Going with Growing](#)

[Part II: Prepping Your Plot](#)

[Part III: Growing Tasty Veg](#)

[Part IV: Growing Your Own Fruit Salad](#)

[Part V: The Part of Tens](#)

[Icons Used in This Book](#)

[Where to Go from Here](#)

### [Part I: Getting Going with Growing](#)

[Chapter 1: Becoming a Grow-Your-Own Gardener](#)

[Recognising the Advantages of Growing Your Own](#)

[Saving money](#)

[Eating fresh](#)

[Growing food metres, not miles, from your doorstep](#)

[Experiencing more variety](#)

[Feasting without chemicals](#)

[Looking at the broader picture](#)

[Tooling Around: Kitting Yourself Out](#)

[Getting the Plot](#)

[Back garden](#)

[Pots and containers](#)

[Allotments](#)

[Knowing What You're Growing](#)

[Growing tasty veg](#)

[Planting luscious fruit](#)

[Chapter 2: Assessing Your Territory](#)

[Making the Most out of Your Back Garden](#)

[Working with raised beds](#)

[Gardening in containers: Pot training](#)

[Growing in bags](#)

[Nurturing vertical gardens](#)

[Growing under Cover](#)

[Growing in a greenhouse](#)

[Growing in a polytunnel](#)

[Growing indoors](#)

[Getting your Share of Allotment Gardening](#)

[Acquiring your plot](#)

[Choosing your plot](#)

[Divvying up your plot: Deep beds or raised beds](#)

[Avoiding common allotment pitfalls](#)

[Clearing Old Plots](#)

[Perennial weeds](#)

[Impeding perennial weeds](#)

[Annual weeds](#)

[Impeding annual weeds](#)

## [Chapter 3: Deciding What, When, Where and How To Grow](#)

### [Deciding What to Grow: Where and When](#)

[Making a planting calendar](#)

[Plotting for success](#)

### [Choosing Your Fruit and Veg](#)

[Going for yield or flavour](#)

[Picking modern or heritage varieties](#)

[Looking at hybrid varieties](#)

### [Selecting Seeds or Plants](#)

[Growing from seed](#)

[Choosing successful plants](#)

[Buying plants to save time](#)

### [Planning Your Plot](#)

[Planning the layout](#)

[Catch cropping](#)

[Intercropping](#)

## [Part II: Prepping Your Plot](#)

### [Chapter 4: Getting Down and Dirty with Your Soil](#)

#### [Delving into the Make-up of Soil](#)

[Mineral particles](#)

[Organic matter](#)

[Water](#)

[Air](#)

[Soil insects, bacteria and fungi](#)

[Assessing Your Soil](#)

[Analysing your soil](#)

[Looking at soil types](#)

[Improving Your Soil](#)

[Adding organic matter](#)

[Making compost](#)

[Chapter 5: Feeding and Watering Your Plants](#)

[Watering Your Crops](#)

[Knowing when to water](#)

[Making water go further](#)

[Reducing water needs](#)

[Eating Well: How Plants Feed](#)

[Nitrogen \(chemical symbol N\)](#)

[Phosphorus \(chemical symbol P\)](#)

[Potassium \(chemical symbol K\)](#)

[Trace elements](#)

[Using Fertilisers](#)

[Solid fertilisers](#)

[Liquid fertilisers](#)

[Organic fertilisers](#)

[Chapter 6: Becoming a Greener Gardener: Growing Organic](#)

[Deciding How Organic You Want to Be: Homes for Courses](#)

[Understanding the Ins and Outs of Organic Gardening](#)

[Knowing your priorities: The soil comes first](#)

[Adapting to your environment](#)

[Choosing the right varieties](#)

[Choosing organic seeds](#)

[Timing your crops carefully](#)

[Gardening without chemicals](#)

[Reducing, reusing, recycling](#)

[Cultivating comfrey](#)

[Living with imperfection](#)

[Gardening with nature](#)

[Assessing the Pros and Cons](#)

## [Chapter 7: Spotting Signs of Trouble](#)

[Keeping Problems at Bay](#)

[Selecting suitable crops](#)

[Looking at crop rotation](#)

[Identifying the Most Common Problems](#)

[Considering climatic problems](#)

[Sorting out soil problems](#)

[Dealing with common pests](#)

[Fighting off common diseases](#)

[Controlling Plant-Specific Problems](#)

[Keeping your vegetables happy](#)

[Fending off fruit pests and diseases](#)

## [Part III: Growing Tasty Veg](#)

[Chapter 8: Looking After Leafy Crops](#)

## Selecting Succulent Salads

Making a hearty salad: Lettuce

Bouncing back: Cut-and-come-again crops

Keep on growing: Winter salads

Blooming lovely: Edible flowers

## Getting to Know the Cabbage Family

From Belgium with love: Brussels sprouts

A vegetable for all seasons: Cabbage

Curly and cute: Kale

Quick off the mark: Calabrese

Slow but superb: Sprouting broccoli

A white shade of pale: Cauliflowers

Pretty in green: Romanesco

A taste of the East: Chinese greens

## Choosing Leaves You Won't See in the Shops

Held in fond regard: Chard/leaf beet

Not just for sailors: Spinach

The crop of the future: Amaranth

Poor-man's asparagus: Good King Henry

## Chapter 9: Raising Root Crops

### Sowing Staples

The humble spud: Potatoes

Plain and simple: Turnips

Crunchy and colourful: Carrots

Sweet and nutty: Parsnips

The onion's big cousin: Leeks

[So good, they make you cry: Onions and shallots](#)

[Pretty in purple: Beetroot](#)

[The Swedish turnip: Swede](#)

[Quick and easy: Radish](#)

#### [Enjoying Exotic Vegetables](#)

[Space invaders: Kohl rabi](#)

[From Florence with love: Fennel](#)

[Sleek and slender: Salsify and scorzonera](#)

[Not such an ugly duckling: Celeriac](#)

[Sweeter than the average: Sweet potatoes](#)

#### [Chapter 10: Growing a Selection for All Seasons](#)

##### [Growing Tangy Leaf Crops](#)

[Something to end up with: Endive](#)

[Two of a kind: Chicory and radicchio](#)

##### [Enjoying Flavoursome Summer Crops](#)

[A bit saucy: Tomatoes](#)

[Spicing things up: Peppers](#)

[Feeling hot: Chillies](#)

[Deep purple: Aubergines](#)

[Cool as a . . . : Cucumbers](#)

##### [Smashing Pumpkins and Squashes](#)

[Prolific producers: Courgettes](#)

[Get ready for a glut: Marrows](#)

[Not just for Halloween: Winter squashes and pumpkins](#)

#### [Chapter 11: Planting Pods and Grains](#)

##### [Nurturing Nutritious Beans](#)



[Healthy and hardy: Broad beans](#)

[Going continental: French beans](#)

[Sprinting up the canes: Runner beans](#)

[Producing pleasing pods: Peas](#)

[Growing Glorious Grains](#)

[Sweet as sugar: Sweetcorn](#)

[Something different: Amaranth and quinoa](#)

[Chapter 12: Branching Out: Growing Unusual Vegetables](#)

[Achieving A+ Artichokes](#)

[Going global: Globe artichokes](#)

[Gone with the wind: Jerusalem artichokes](#)

[A taste of the east: Chinese artichokes](#)

[Growing Culinary Treats](#)

[The highlight of spring: Asparagus](#)

[Stick to it: Celery](#)

[Beside the seaside: Seakale](#)

[Trying Something Different](#)

[A blast from the past: Cardoons](#)

[Going gumbo: Okra](#)

[Pretty and dainty: Asparagus peas](#)

## [Part IV: Growing Your Own Fruit Salad](#)

[Chapter 13: Fruit in a Flash: Planting Quick-Growing Fruit](#)

[Creating Summer Treats](#)

[Succulent and summery: Strawberries](#)

[Fruit for the masses: Raspberries](#)

## Growing Fruit from Seed

Not just a pretty face: Cape gooseberries

Unfamiliar but useful: Huckleberries

More varied than you might think: Melons

Crunchy and juicy: Watermelons

## Chapter 14: Very Berry! Growing Berries, Currants and Nuts

### Growing Healthy Berries

Dark and delicious: Blackberries

It takes two: Loganberries

Not to be left out: Gooseberries

Everyone's favourite: Blueberries

Time for Christmas: Cranberries

Scandinavian delight: Lingonberries

### Coaching Currants

Better than blueberries: Blackcurrants

Summer jewels: Redcurrants and whitecurrants

### Trying Something New: Growing Unusual Fruits

Getting going with Goji berries

Here we go: Mulberries

Scents of pride: Quinces

Much maligned: Medlars

### Going Nuts

A long-term challenge: Walnuts

Ideal for smaller gardens: Hazelnuts

## Chapter 15: Caring for Slow-Growing Tree Fruit

### Looking at Seed and Rootstocks

## [Deciding on Tree Types](#)

[Cordons](#)

[Standards and half-standards](#)

[Bushes](#)

[Espaliers](#)

[Stepovers](#)

[Fans](#)

## [Anchoring Apple Trees](#)

[Rummaging around rootstocks](#)

[Keeping the doctor away: Growing apples](#)

## [Planting Pears](#)

[Rooting around with rootstocks](#)

[Pear-ing up: Growing pears](#)

## [Sweet success: Stone Fruits](#)

[Taste of summer: Plums, gages and damsons](#)

[Summer loving: Cherries](#)

[A surprise in store: Apricots](#)

[A nice pair: Peaches and nectarines](#)

## [Chapter 16: Growing Greenhouse Fruits](#)

### [Cultivating Climbing Fruit](#)

[Fruit of the vine: Grapes](#)

[The Chinese gooseberry: Kiwi fruit](#)

## [Getting a Zest for Life – Growing Citrus and Other Exotic Fruits](#)

[Sunshine fruits: Oranges, lemons and limes](#)

[The taste of paradise: Figs](#)

[Growing brightly: Pomegranates](#)

[Getting loved up: Passion fruit](#)

[An acquired taste: Tree tomatoes](#)

[Totally tropical: Pawpaws](#)

## [Part V: The Part of Tens](#)

### [Chapter 17: Ten Tips for Planting a Herb Garden](#)

[Growing Herbs from Seed](#)

[Growing Herbs from Cuttings](#)

[Cheating with Cheap Young Plants](#)

[Finding the Best Herbs for Shade](#)

[Choosing Lookers](#)

[Keeping Herbs Healthy in Pots](#)

[Pruning Your Herbs to Keep Them Young](#)

[Keeping Mint in Check](#)

[Choosing the Best Mints for Flavour](#)

[Keeping Your Bay Tree in Tip-Top Condition](#)

### [Chapter 18: Ten Projects for Your Plot](#)

[Growing a Few Salad Leaves](#)

[Growing Three Different Beans in a Pot](#)

[Grow Pumpkins, Beans and Sweetcorn the Native American Way](#)

[Growing Strawberries Without a Garden](#)

[Preserving Herbs](#)

[Adding Colour with Edible Flowers](#)

[Sprouting Seeds on the Windowsill](#)

[Growing Carrots on the Patio](#)

[Going Up the Wall: Wall Planters](#)

## [Aiming High: Hanging Baskets](#)

# ***Growing Your Own Fruit & Veg For Dummies®*** **by Geoff Stebbings**



A John Wiley and Sons, Ltd, Publication

## **Growing Your Own Fruit & Veg For Dummies®**

Published by

**John Wiley & Sons, Ltd**

The Atrium

Southern Gate

Chichester

West Sussex

PO19 8SQ

England

E-mail (for orders and customer service enquires): [cs-books@wiley.co.uk](mailto:cs-books@wiley.co.uk)

Visit our Home Page on [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)

Copyright © 2009 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester,  
West Sussex, England

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester, West  
Sussex

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except under the terms of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of a licence issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, Saffron House, 6-10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS, UK, without the permission in writing of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, England, or emailed to [permreq@wiley.co.uk](mailto:permreq@wiley.co.uk), or faxed to (44) 1243 770620.

**Trademarks:** Wiley, the Wiley Publishing logo, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, A Reference for the Rest of Us!, The Dummies Way, Dummies Daily, The Fun and Easy Way, Dummies.com and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries, and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Wiley Publishing, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

<p><b><u>LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY:</u></b> THE PUBLISHER, THE AUTHOR, AND ANYONE ELSE INVOLVED IN PREPARING THIS WORK MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR</p>
--

COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR EVERY SITUATION. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 800-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.



For technical support, please visit

[www.wiley.com/techsupport](http://www.wiley.com/techsupport).

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data: A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-470-69960-7

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Bell & Bain Ltd,  
Glasgow

10 9 8 7 6 5 4



## About the Author

**Geoff Stebbings** got hooked on gardening at the age of eight and soon knew that he wanted to make it his career. He had weekend gardening jobs while at school, as well as working for a greengrocer. He trained at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and has worked in garden centres and in a specialist nursery before becoming a Head Gardener, restoring a historic garden. It was while working here that Geoff became closely involved with the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens and he had responsibility for the National Collection of Award-Winning Iris.

In 1989, to try and get others interested in gardening, Geoff became a gardening writer and worked for *Garden News*, *Garden Answers*, *Practical Gardening* and *The Garden* – the journal of the Royal Horticultural Society. He then worked as a freelance writer for ten years and has written several books, including *The Gardener's Guide to Growing Irises*, *The Year-Round Garden* and *Spring Bulbs*.

Geoff also lectures widely and is a member of the Garden Roadshow, which travels around the country visiting major flower shows and answering people's problems. He is a keen gardener and grows a wide range of plants in his garden, greenhouses and on his allotments. His passions are iris and growing tasty food – especially tomatoes – but he says that he could never be a specialist because he loves growing anything and everything – except pampas grass!

Geoff is currently Editor of *Garden Answers* magazine.

## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to everyone who wants to discover the satisfaction of growing some of their own food. It's a voyage of discovery that never ends.

## **Publisher's Acknowledgments**

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at

[www.dummies.com/register/](http://www.dummies.com/register/).

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

***Acquisitions, Editorial, and Media Development***

**Development Editor:** Steve Edwards

**Content Editor:** Jo Theedom

**Commissioning Editor:** Nicole Hermitage

**Publishing Assistant:** Jennifer Prytherch

**Copy Editor:** Andy Finch

**Proofreader:** David Price

**Technical Editor:** Sue Fisher

**Executive Editor:** Samantha Spickernell

**Executive Project Editor:** Daniel Mersey

**Cover Photos:** © blickwinkel/Alamy (front); © Chuck Place/Alamy, © Organics Image Library/Alamy (back)

**Cartoons:** Ed McLachlan

***Composition Services***

**Project Coordinator:** Lynsey Stanford

**Layout and Graphics:** Christin Swinford

**Proofreader:** Melissa Cossell

**Indexer:** Ty Koontz

**Brand Reviewers:** Jennifer Bingham, Zoë Wykes

# Introduction

---

Gardening is an exciting journey. Every year is different: growing something new, experimenting with new varieties, and experiencing all that the British weather can throw at you (perfect weather one year and rotten weather the next!). No matter how many years you spend in the garden, you never get to know everything and you can always improve. But with every year you gain more experience, and the successes you have make your yearning for knowledge get even stronger.

Growing your own crops gets you outside in the open air and gives you plenty of exercise. More importantly, growing crops gets you back in touch with the seasons and with nature – something that modern living has moved us away from. You experience the near miracle of seeds germinating. You nurture your seedlings and young plants, do your best for them, battle against their enemies, enjoy the abundance of your plants, and finally feed your body with food that's fresh and richer in nutrients than anything you can buy.

Growing crops is fun and rewarding for all ages. Traditionally the domain of the retired, allotments are gaining more and more popularity with younger people. Children usually enjoy gardening where the results are quick and dramatic – fortunately many vegetables fit this description. Kids can also be proud to help provide food for the table. Gardening provides them with so much that they can't discover in the classroom.

Whether you've decided to grow your own crops because you want to know what you're eating, because you care about food miles, because you want to appreciate the

differences in the seasons, or because you want to save money, you're bound to enjoy the experience. You'll never know everything, but after all, the journey and not the arriving is the real pleasure.

## About This Book

*Growing Your Own Fruit & Veg For Dummies* enables you to get started in the adventure of growing your own food. I've packed each chapter with the information you need to get the best results and avoid common mistakes. I've written the book so that even if you've never grown anything before, you're able to get started, understand what you're doing, and know what to expect.

Gardening is a huge subject and the plants in this book are as varied as any in the flower garden, but getting to grips with the principles of growing fruit and veg stands you in good stead for growing anything. You can grow plants in as many different ways as there are gardeners and because most plants simply want to grow, sometimes very odd methods give good results. A book like this can't possibly deal with all the different ways to grow plants, so instead I concentrate on tried and trusted ways to sow, plant, grow and prune. As you become more experienced you may discover that you can cheat sometimes and still get good results, but follow the tips in this book and you're well on your way to success. Treat this book as an experienced friend guiding you as you enter the exciting world of growing your own food.

# Conventions Used in This Book

To help you get the most from this book, I follow a few conventions:

*Italic* emphasises and highlights new words or terms that I define.

**Boldfaced** text indicates the action part of numbered steps.

Monofont text displays web addresses.

I give all measurements in metric (so that's centimetres and metres rather than inches and feet).

## Foolish Assumptions

In writing this book, I made a few assumptions about who you are:

You may be completely new to gardening, and don't know a propagator from a pumpkin! Or maybe you do, but just don't know where to start. Don't worry if you're a beginner. Everyone has to start somewhere and even gardeners who've been growing for decades are beginners with plants they've never grown before.

You may have some experience of gardening, but of the flowers and shrubs kind, and want to get clued up about fruit and veg.

You may have been growing your own food for years, but want to try something new.

You don't have a garden the size of Wembley Stadium; you may not even have a garden at all.

You have a stronger-than-usual fondness for mulberries and have noticed that I include them in this book!

As you can see, even seasoned gardeners can find what they need to know to grow unfamiliar crops within the lovely yellow and black covers of this book.

## **How This Book Is Organised**

I've organised *Growing Your Own Fruit & Veg For Dummies* into five parts. Each part covers a range of subjects to get you growing your own food and is split into chapters to help you easily find the information you want.

### **Part I: Getting Going with Growing**

Before you even consider sowing a seed you need to know certain basics. This part helps you to understand why growing crops makes sense and to identify what tools you need to do it; it teaches you about the soil and the different places you can grow crops (including containers, raised beds and in the greenhouse); and it



explains what to look for when buying plants and seeds and the best way to plan your plot for health and efficiency.

## **Part II: Prepping Your Plot**

Here I tackle the basic principles you need to understand to get the most out of gardening. Feeding and watering and pests and diseases are all here. I start by looking at soil: how to work out what type of soil you have, how to test and improve it and how to make compost. I go on to explain the various types of fertiliser, what they do and how to use them, and the secrets of watering and why your crops may need extra water. I put forward the case for organic gardening, looking at the advantages and disadvantages and considering whether going organic makes sense. Lastly, I look at what gardeners dread – all those pests and diseases that seem bent on destroying your crops – along with ways to keep the damage to a minimum.

## **Part III: Growing Tasty Veg**

From the mundane and everyday to the exotic and unfamiliar, this part covers the delicious vegetables you can grow. I look at leafy vegetables that crop all year round, and which are packed with good things to make you healthy. You can also read about the root crops that people traditionally enjoy over winter, although you don't have to wait for the cold weather to arrive before you enjoy them. To add a dash of sunshine, this part goes on to look at summer crops that can make you believe you live in the Mediterranean. I then take a look at the useful and productive pods and grains that are the joys of the

summer plot, many of which are easy to grow in the smallest garden, before exploring some of the more unfamiliar veg that you can grow on your plot.

## **Part IV: Growing Your Own Fruit Salad**

With all the fruits that I guide you through in this part, you can soon find yourself throwing together the most varied and exotic fruit salad you've ever eaten! I start by helping the impatient gardener, who wants something tasty to eat in the shortest time, to avoid going hungry! You can then find advice about growing the soft fruits, currants and berries that really are the taste of summer, as well as the fruits that you can plant for the future – trees and shrubs that will feed you for many years to come and still be cropping for your children. Finally, I take a look at fruits that feel the cold and need the sunniest, most sheltered spot in your garden or a cosy indoor spot in a greenhouse or conservatory.

## **Part V: The Part of Tens**

At the back of the book, I offer up a couple of fun chapters with some projects for you to try out and some tips for growing those herbs that some meals just can't do without!

## **Icons Used in This Book**

Scattered throughout this book are icons to guide you along your way. Icons are a handy *For Dummies* way to draw your attention to special bits and pieces of information.



Keep your sights on the target for tips and suggestions from one who knows!



Remember these important points of information to stand a better chance of success on your plot.



Plenty of things can go wrong in the garden – from insects that are even more partial to your crops than you are, to weather conditions that can play havoc with your plans – and these icons help you to identify the potential spanners in your works.



You grow food because you want to eat it, right? This icon lets you know where I have some tasty ideas for using your crops in the kitchen: not recipes – just suggestions.



Fruit and veg are good for you: fact. This icon lets you know when I'm telling you just how good.



Maybe you became interested in growing your own fruit and veg because you're interested in the idea of organic gardening. If so, keep an eye open for this

icon, which highlights places in the text where I have some info for you.

## **Where to Go from Here**

I've organised this book so that you can just dip in and out of it as you like. You can read it from start to finish if you prefer, but you can also look up what you want to read about in the Table of Contents and jump straight in at that section. You can use this book in whatever way suits you best. If you're not sure where to start, you may want to turn to Part I. It gives you the basics for getting started from scratch, and points to places later in the book where you can go for more detailed information.

Good luck, and happy gardening!

# Part I

## Getting Going with Growing



'Small garden, giant vegetables,  
just doesn't work, Ernest!'

### In this part . . .

As with any new subject that you tackle, the first problem you're likely to come across is that you don't know where to start. You've decided that you want to grow some of your own food but want to get off on the right foot without making any silly mistakes. Well, gardening is all about discovering and although some firm rules need to be followed, others are more flexible.

You may have lots of reasons for wanting to grow your own fruit and veg, but whatever your reason, this part is all about the basics. This aspect includes having reasonable ambitions to start with and working out what you can reasonably grow in the area you have and what crops grow best where.

Just as importantly, you need your armoury of tools. You may be tempted to go out to a garden centre and spend a fortune, thinking that you need a wide range of tools to stand a chance of being successful. The truth is that you need surprisingly few tools, and that you end up rarely using half the tools you buy whereas the other half get worn away in no time!

Last but not least, you need to understand what you're growing and how some of the crops are grouped together – in this book and by gardeners – so you can find them in shops and catalogues. When you've grasped this information, you're ready to grow!