

The ultimate home farming guide

More Hong Kong people are growing their own food at home. You can do it too! Read on to find expert tips on creating an organic farm so you can grow your own vegetables and herbs for dinner



GROWING your own food brings your home to life with splashes of colour and fresh **flavours**. It connects us to the Earth and the environment around us, and provides us with a release from the stresses and strains of modern everyday life. Depending on how much space and sunlight you have, you could plant a range of **edible** plants from lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers, to sprouts and even edible flowers (yes, some flowers are edible!).

If you have a terrace, balcony or window box...

MOST herbs do well in pots in a typical **high-rise** apartment in Hong Kong – they are good for tea-making as well as cooking. Mint, lemon balm, basil, rosemary, lemongrass, rue, spring onion, chilli and ginger are all possible.

What about vegetables? Few vegetables are as attractive, tasty and easy to grow as lettuce. Lettuce is popular in home gardens and the **trick** to good lettuce is cool weather – winter is the best season for growing (and eating) lettuce in Hong Kong. Other vegetables – like spinach, chive and carrots – also require little growing space. If you have space for an 8-inch wide planter, you could even set up a small trellis for planting tomatoes, peas, beans and cucumbers!

If you have limited sunlight at home...

DO not worry; growing food at home is still possible. Try sprouting! Growing sprouts is easy, fun and **economical**. Sprouting seeds, water, a jar and a cover for the jar – these are what you need to enjoy sprouting fun. Choices of seeds for sprouting include red bean, green bean, soya bean, black bean, kidney bean, mustard, radish, sunflower, broccoli, and many others.

Sprouts are delicious and highly **nutritious** additions to a vegetarian, vegan or raw food diet. On the right are step-by-step **procedures** for sprouting.



Edible flowers of vegetable and herbs delight the eye as well as the palate and are becoming popular as gifts.



Step One: Soaking

Put one to two tablespoons of sprouting seeds in a jar. Cover the top of the jar with cloth and secure it with a rubber band. Rinse the seeds with water, drain and refill so that the water is about an inch above the seeds. Place the jar in a dark place, let the seeds soak for four to eight hours and then drain the water.

Step Two: Rinsing

Rinse two to three times per day for three to five days. After thoroughly draining the water, lay the jar on its side to spread out the seeds. Keep the jar in a dark place and keep the seeds moist, not wet.

Step Three: Harvesting

After three to five days, the sprouts should be filling up the jar. Rinse the sprouts with water and remove the husks. If your sprouts need to develop chlorophyll or carotene, there is one final step (the seed package directions should tell you whether greening is necessary).

Step Four: Greening

Once the husks are removed, place the sprouts back into the sprouting jar or into a clear plastic airtight bag. Put the sprouts in indirect sunlight. It takes a day for the chlorophyll and carotenes to develop. Once the sprouts are ready, rinse, drain, and eat.

Vocabulary

flavour (n) 味道

M: Meaning **E:** Example

M: the taste of a food or drink

E: Which **flavour** do you like: strawberry or green tea?

Be careful not to mix it up with 'favour', which has a totally different meaning. Favour refers to support for an idea, or an act of kindness or help:

E: Most of the class is in **favour** of the monitor's suggestion.

E: Could you do me a **favour** and turn on the lights, please?

1 edible (adj) 可以食用的

M: that can be eaten

E: Do not touch these mushrooms. They are not **edible**.

2 high-rise (adj) 高層的

M: tall with many levels

E: **High-rise** buildings are almost everywhere in Hong Kong.

3 trick (n) 訣竅

M: a clever method that works well

E: The **trick** to winning a chess game is to consider what your opponent's next move is.

4 economical (adj) 經濟的

M: not wasting money

E: Mum is an expert in **economical** shopping. She makes use of every penny to its fullest.

5 nutritious (adj) 有營養的

M: full of nutrients

E: The athlete eats a **nutritious** meal every morning.

6 procedure (n) 步驟

M: the method or steps of doing something

E: Follow these **procedures** and you can install the software.