



National Garden Gift Voucher
**Workplace Gardening
Competition**



Gardening is good for you

There's more and more evidence that a bit of greenery goes a long way to boosting our health and well-being. And you don't need to be the next Alan Titchmarsh to give it a go; you don't even need a garden!

This competition's about having fun greening up your workplace, and taking a few minutes to connect with nature. You'll find yourself getting to know your colleagues, less stressed, and more productive. We've even highlighted some of the science to prove it if you need to convince your boss you should all take part!

How to take part

It couldn't be simpler. All you need to do is have a go as a team at one or more of the activities in this brochure. You should post a photo or video of how you're getting on onto our Facebook page, using the hashtag **#GIGFY** (Gardening is good for you).

Every week from 25 March to 31 July we'll pick and announce a winner who'll get a £50 National Garden Gift Voucher.

About National Garden Gift Vouchers

National Garden Gift Vouchers are the UK's longest running promotion of gardening; they're given or received by around two million people a year. We (the Horticultural Trades Association), are a not-for-profit body; we use our proceeds from the gift vouchers to promote gardening and gardening good causes.

Two examples of things we support are: National Children's Gardening Week, which champions gardening for children; and Greenfingers Charity, which provides magical gardens for extremely poorly children in hospices.



Gardening and the workplace

Lots of studies have shown the benefits of greenery at work. But our offices, schools, factories and other work places often have little in the way of plants and greenery. According to researchers Human Spaces, only 42% of office workers have live plants in their workplace. And yet research from across the world proves the following benefits from gardening and plants at work.



Improved wellness

A study by the new University of Technology in Sydney reported a 37% reduction in tension and anxiety levels among workers provided with plants at work compared with a control group. The Kings Fund have also conducted a review that highlights evidence that “having access to green space is linked to better mental wellbeing and lower stress levels”. Gardening really is good for us!



Improved productivity

A study by the University of Exeter found that introducing plants into a previously sparse workplace increased productivity by 15%. The research suggests that this is because a green office makes staff more physically, mentally, and emotionally involved in their work, both as individuals and as teams.



Improved creativity

According to Human Spaces’ study, staff in workplaces with natural elements such as plants and natural light reported levels of creativity 15% higher than staff in workplaces without these elements. And let’s be honest, even without the science to back it up, don’t we all feel that bit more refreshed and creative if we get a bit of green in our lives? So make sure you join us in one of the fun, creative workplace gardening projects in our competition!

1. For example Healthy Workplaces: The Effects of Nature Contact at Work on Employee Stress and Health, 2011. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3072911/
2. The global impact of biophilic design in the workplace, 2015. https://greenplantsforgreenbuildings.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Human-Spaces-Report-Biophilic-Global_Impact_Biophilic_Design.pdf
3. The Positive effect of office plants, 2010. https://www.ngia.com.au/Attachment?Action=Download&Attachment_id=1430
4. Why plants in the office make us more productive, 2014 www.exeter.ac.uk/news/featurednews/title_409094_en.html



Chilli-off

Chilli plants are easy to grow indoors from seeds. See who can grow the best looking or hottest chilli in your workplace!

You will need from the garden centre

Pack of chilli seeds

Plant pots and saucers

Multi-purpose compost

Liquid plant food

Instructions

- 1 Fill your plant pot(s) with compost
- 2 Put two or three chilli seeds in the centre of the compost and sprinkle a little more compost over the seeds
- 3 Give your seeds a good watering
- 4 Keep your pot in a warm place for the next week or two, making sure the compost stays damp
- 5 After a week or two your seeds will sprout. When you can see which shoot is strongest, pick out the others so you have one plant in your pot
- 6 Keep your chilli plants in a sunny place like a window sill and water them. Give them some plant food every few weeks
- 7 When the chilli flowers appear, touch the flowers gently in turn with your finger or a brush. This pollinates the flowers so they produce chillis
- 8 Now you just need to wait for your chillis to grow so you can see who your workplace's chilli king or queen is!



DID YOU KNOW? The heat of chillis is measured using the scoville scale. A humble Jalapeno comes in at around 5,000 scovilles, but a Bhut jolokia chilli comes in at around 1,000,000! You can usually see how many scovilles your chilli will have from looking on the seed packet.

HOW TO ENTER

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Find us at: [facebook.com/GardenGiftVouchers](https://www.facebook.com/GardenGiftVouchers)



Build a car park allotment

Turn a parking space into a productive raised bed allotment and fundraise for a local charity. If parking's at a premium where you work, any sunny space will do!

You will need from the garden centre:

Multi-purpose compost

Packs of vegetable seed, good choices include: Swiss chard, tomatoes, cauliflower, beans, courgettes

Bamboo canes and string if you're growing beans so they have something to climb

Watering can or a hosepipe to get water to your plants

Plant labels

For your raised bed:

Some wooden planks about eight inches wide to create the edging of your raised bed

Some bricks or something heavy to hold your edging in place

Some ground cover membrane to line your raised bed

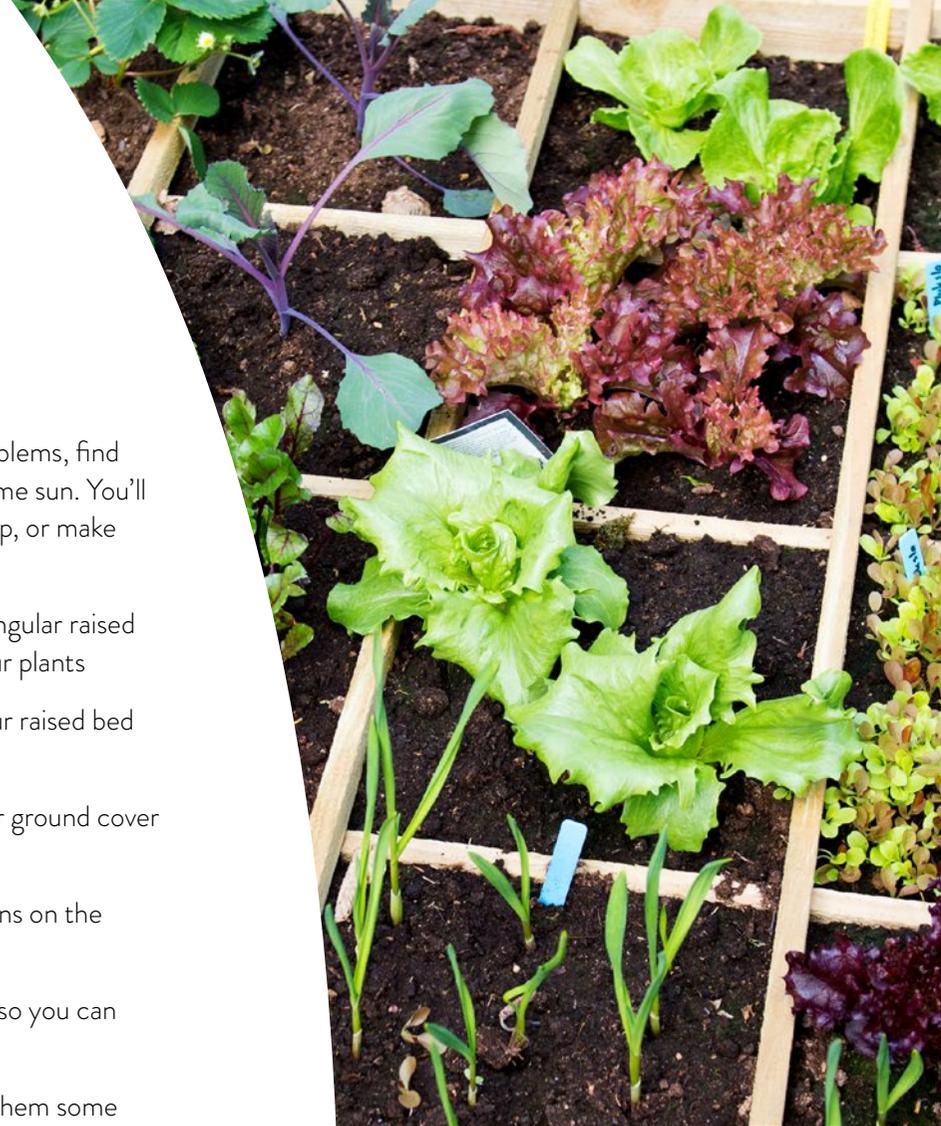
* If you don't want to build a raised bed, you can use pots and containers instead

Instructions

- 1 Pick your parking space. Or if that's going to cause problems, find another place to grow your crops that's going to get some sun. You'll need to water your plants, so pick somewhere near a tap, or make sure you can run a hosepipe to your plants
- 2 Arrange your planks of wood so they're making a rectangular raised bed, enclosing the space in which you want to grow your plants
- 3 Secure the planks using your bricks so the edges of your raised bed are stable
- 4 Line the bottom and edges of your raised bed with your ground cover membrane, and fill your raised bed with the compost
- 5 Sow your seeds in the compost following the instructions on the packs and give them a good watering
- 6 Put down plant labels in where you've sown your seeds so you can remember which plants are where
- 7 As your vegetables grow, keep them watered and give them some plant food every few weeks
- 8 When your plants look ready to harvest set up an honesty box to fundraise for a local charity – people can put in a donation whenever they take some vegetables home



DID YOU KNOW? The value of vegetables that we grow in our gardens every year is £1.5 billion according to the government, which is why we think this challenge could be a great fundraiser for a local charity. If you're looking for a charity to support have a look at Greenfingers; they design and build magical gardens for children in hospices which we think is absolutely fantastic: www.greenfingerscharity.org.uk



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Window sill salad

See who can grow the best home-made salad to bring to a team picnic!

You will need from the garden centre

Packs of salad, herb, vegetable or edible flower seeds

Multi-purpose compost

Watering can

Plant pots or containers and saucers

Liquid plant food

Fleece or fabric if you're growing outside before May

Instructions

- 1 Fill your pots or containers with multi-purpose compost
- 2 Sow your seeds following the instructions on the back of the pack of seeds
- 3 Cover the seeds with a thin layer of compost and give them a good watering
- 4 Keep the compost moist and warm, and in a few weeks you should see your seeds start to sprout
- 5 Keep your plants in a sunny place like a window sill, or move them to a sunny space outside. If you move your plants outside, protect them from frost if it's going to get cold. You can do this by covering the plants with your fleece or fabric overnight
- 6 Set a date for your office picnic, and get together to eat what you've grown
- 7 For extra team spirit or a competitive edge, try awarding some prizes for things like best looking salad, ripest tomato, biggest courgette – whatever captures your imagination!



DID YOU KNOW? You can spice up your salad with edible flowers. Nasturtium flowers and seeds are edible and have a great peppery taste, or calendula seeds are a colourful addition to a salad. If you're feeling brave, try some electric daisy flowers (*Acmella oleracea*); these little stunners give a fizzy, shocking sensation when they touch the tongue!



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Ticklish plants

Break the ice with colleagues with a dancing plant

You will need from the garden centre

Plant pots and saucers

Multi-purpose compost

Ticklish plant seeds (the plant's 'proper' name is *Mimosa Pudica*)

Liquid plant food

Instructions

- 1 Fill your pots or containers with multi-purpose compost
- 2 Sow your seeds following the instructions on the back of the pack of seeds
- 3 Cover the seeds with a thin layer of compost and give them a good watering
- 4 Keep the compost moist and warm, and in a few weeks you should see your seeds start to sprout.
- 5 Keep your plants in a sunny place like a window sill
- 6 When your plants are grown, tickle the leaves. Your plant will respond by hiding its leaves or even dancing!
- 7 Don't be shy – ask a colleague if you can tickle their plant. It could be the start of a beautiful friendship; or failing that just a good excuse to break from the daily grind!

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DID YOU KNOW? If you tickle your *Mimosa Pudica* plant enough, it may stop closing its leaves and dancing. That's because some *Mimosa* plants seem to be able to work out that the touch is not a threat and stop responding – it may be a sign that some plants have memories!



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