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## CORONA-YOUR-OWN

Helping you to get organic growing - despite the disruption  
**e-Newsletter 1** 27 March 2020

### Welcome

In these unprecedented times, as we have had to cancel our scheduled meetings and there is uncertainty about our planned outdoor trips for this year, we are aiming to engage with new members and keep in touch with existing members by producing a regular newsletter. It will be a random mix of growing your own (as organically as possible) and items of wider interest to those interested in organic food production and food security. All our advice is not set in stone and isn't intended to be a comprehensive guide – it is just helpful (hopefully) suggestions.

### GROWING YOUR OWN

One positive from the current situation (apart from the gorgeous weather) is that many of you will have more time to experiment with growing your own. There is a wide variety of online retailers of organic seeds, plants and compost if you haven't already bought them in.



National groups including the Royal Horticultural Society and National Vegetable Society have reported a substantial increase in people starting to grow their own veg for the first time. Will food supply fears see a rise in home-grown veg?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-52009161>

Organic compost is really difficult – if not impossible – to find in any of the major garden centres or DIY stores locally. One place to mention, because it is local and collection was possible until today (delivery only now) is Tudor Environmental on the edge of the airport at Baginton.

<https://www.tudorenvironmental.co.uk/planting-and-growing/composts-compost-additives-and-bark/melcourt-peat-free-composts/melcourt-sylva-grow-organic-growing-medium> They are not a specialist organic supplier, but they do sell Sylvagrow organic growing medium in 50 litre sacks.



## WHAT TO DO NOW - EDIBLES

I read somewhere that the soil is warm enough to sow seeds when you can sit on it with your bare bum (I haven't tried it and I'm not going to!). You can tell how warm the soil is by the feel of it in the shade. The forecast for next week is highs in single figures, so it might be best to hold fire on outdoor sowing for a while unless you have some sort of protection, such as cloches.

### Potatoes:

Seed potatoes should be chitted (left to sprout) in egg boxes or seed trays in a light, FROST FREE, place ready for planting outside when the soil is a little warmer, or in large containers.



### Salad leaves:



A wide variety of mixed salad leaf seeds are available, as well as things like pea shoots. Sow fairly thinly in medium sized pots and give them some warmth if you can – windowsill, porch, cold frame, greenhouse.

### Brassicas:

Sow in seed trays – outdoors is fine, they will be warmer than in the soil

### Root veg:

Sow in cells and eventually plant out the complete cell, so they grow in clumps

### Peppers, chillies, tomatoes:

Sow now if you have a heated greenhouse or somewhere light enough indoors – otherwise leave until April, they need heat to germinate and to grow on.

### Soft fruit:

Strawberries are easy to grow – look for varieties with good flavour and a long fruiting season – anonymous pink flowered ones, bought from Wilkos some years ago, and pineapple flavoured, alpine sized ones grown from seed, have both qualities.



## WHAT TO DO NOW - ORNAMENTALS

### Lawns:

After the record-breakingly wet winter, there is a lot of moss in lawns. Rake it out – it is really good exercise!

### Perennial flowers:

Divide and pot up if clumps are looking too big. Cut out dead flower stalks from last year.

### Perennial grasses:

Cut last year's dead foliage out

### Flowers from seed:

Sow seed for many varieties now, preferably indoors at the moment

## GENERAL INTEREST

You might want to look at HEOG member Carrie's YouTube channel 'Home on the Hill' which includes a video of her growing plans for this year

- <https://www.youtube.com/user/carriep18/>



Two YouTube sites related to **Permaculture** -

- <https://www.youtube.com/user/PermacultureMedia>
- <https://www.youtube.com/user/happenfilms>



### Food security

Patrick Holden shares his thoughts and reflections about the impact and implications of the current pandemic and the security and resilience of our future food systems.

- <https://sustainablefoodtrust.org/articles/the-coronavirus-pandemic-and-future-food-security/>

## POSTSCRIPT

Feedback from our readers is important, so if you have ideas, news or tips you would like to share, please let us know.

If you have any questions related to organic growing which you think our members might be able to answer, let us know and we will try to include the questions and replies in our next newsletter. You can contact us at [enews@heog.org.uk](mailto:enews@heog.org.uk) .

*Gillian McGivern*