



**BRISTOL**  
**BITES BACK**  
**BETTER**

**GROW FOR  
WELLBEING**

**IT'S TIME TO BUILD A RESILIENT  
FUTURE THROUGH FOOD.  
IT'S TIME FOR BRISTOL TO  
#BITEBACKBETTER**

More than ever before, Bristolians' appetite for food growing has – quite literally – taken root.

Since the initial period of national lockdown began in March 2020, more people have found the time and passion for growing food on windowsills, in back gardens, and in shared community spaces and allotments. It's great for our mental and physical health, it can transform the world around us, and gives each and every one of us the power to create our own source of affordable, delicious and nutritious food, right on our own doorsteps.

Read on to find out how you can be part of Bristol's growing community of food growers!

In this pack you can explore why growing your own food, at any scale, is so good for you physical and mental health. You'll find a wealth of tips and resources to get you started or up your game!

You'll find QR Codes in this pack linking you to a lovely video or an interesting article. You just need to point the camera on your smart phone at it and follow the link. If this doesn't work, you will need to download a QR reader from your app store.

Let us and everyone else know if you've found things in this pack useful! Follow and use the **#BiteBackBetter** hashtag.

*It's time to build a resilient future through food. It's time for Bristol to*  
**#BiteBackBetter.**



# WHY

## For you and your family

It's no secret that spending time with nature is good for our mental health and wellbeing. Gardening and growing food are good for us, inside and out. Time in green space has even been found to **increase IQ in children**, and is said to **lead to better mental health in adulthood**.

Cultivating something from seed, caring for it and seeing it fruit, then getting to eat it and share it with others is one of the most liberating and empowering things you can do. And it can cost you next to nothing!

## For our city

Urban community gardens are peaceful, productive, natural spaces that are breeding grounds for community spirit and wildlife alike. The value of strong social networks in communities cannot be understated. There are endless stories of folk, young and old, all around the world, finding peace and meaning in joining a community of growers.

Growing food in parts of the city where there's limited access to fresh produce can give residents better access to fresh, healthy food. This can be particularly important when food supply is disrupted, like we saw during the pandemic, and may face in future due to the climate crisis, for example. What's more, urban growing can provide opportunities for entrepreneurship and extra income, particularly important in low-income communities.

Green allotments and veg patches across a



city are beautiful, and contribute to making Bristol a more joyful place to be. Plus, just witnessing food growing makes us value it more, and helps remind us city-dwellers of where it comes from.

## For our planet

Gardens and plants absorb heat, carbon dioxide and rainwater, making our city more resilient to climate change. A city with no green space is far more prone to flooding and intolerable temperatures. They're also the places where wildlife – small mammals, birds and insects – love to live. This biodiversity is great for the environment, encouraging natural pest controllers and pollinators.

Eating locally produced food reduces the impact of transporting food and it's usually produced with far fewer chemicals and inputs than supermarket produce, meaning less damage to our planet and to your health.

Still not convinced? Have a read of this article from **grOWN IT** for more on the benefits of urban growing.



# HOW

## From your windowsill

No space? No problem. Your windowsill is just the right place to grow herbs, salads, microgreens (mini salad leaves!) and more, to brighten up your home and your meals. You don't even need a flower pot to start – old food tubs can do the trick. [Dig In: grow your own grub](#) from the BBC is full of tips and tricks for making the most of small growing spaces, including windowsills. And why not try the easiest and quickest type of home-grown food – seed sprouts – [this guide from Vertical Veg](#) will get you started:

[www.verticalveg.org.uk/6-easy-steps-to-sprout-heaven](http://www.verticalveg.org.uk/6-easy-steps-to-sprout-heaven)

## From your garden

If you're lucky enough to have your own outdoor space, the possibilities are endless. Learning from those around you is the best way to build up knowledge, so try asking neighbours what they do, or try joining community growing sessions. You can find some great resources and info from our friends at [Incredible Edible Bristol](#), including lots of [helpful videos](#) they made during lockdown. Search for them on Facebook.

## Take on an allotment

While it's true that there are long waiting lists in some parts of the city, there are vacant plots still to be found. Take a look at the [Council's Allotment Finder](#) to see what's available near you. Visit the Allotment Finder website, call 0117 922 3719 or email [allotments@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:allotments@bristol.gov.uk). Remember allotments are big! Taking a portion of a plot, or sharing a larger plot with friends can be a great way to make growing more manageable and fun.



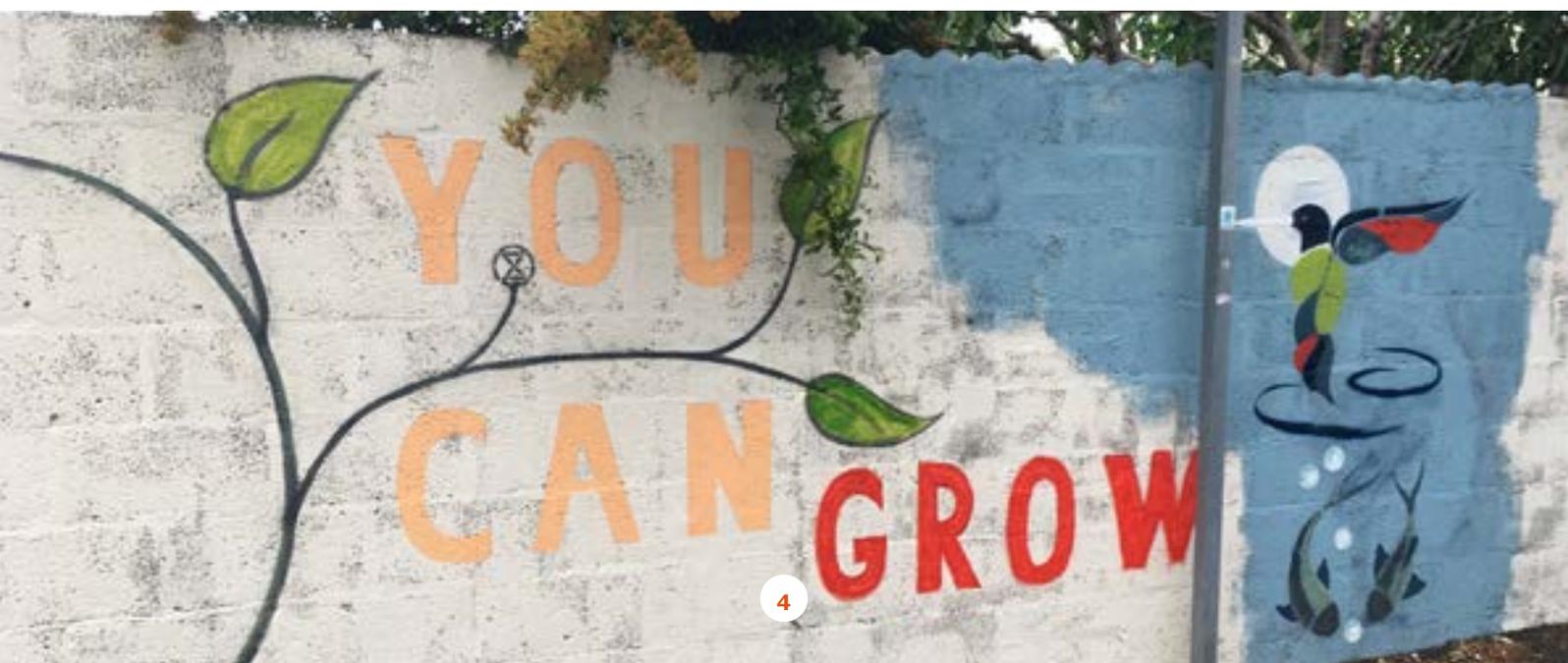
## Getting started

Sara of Incredible Edible Bristol recommends [Garden Organic](#) for beginner's growing advice.

[Watch our webinar](#) with Sara on Growing Food at Home for lots of useful advice.

## Ready to start but not sure what to grow?

Firstly, choose things you like to eat! Then find out what to sow when, and think about your space. Planning how to lay out your plants is a good idea. You'll find useful resources to help you later in this pack. You can also use an app, like [The Garden Planner](#).





## Where to find what you need.

**Seeds:** You can get seeds for free from the veg you buy. Alternatively, veg seeds are available widely in local hardware shops and online. Some good ones include:

- [Real Seeds](#)
- [Sea Spring Seeds](#)
- [Plants of Distinction](#)
- [Seed Cooperative](#)

**Pots:** Grow in anything you have to hand. You can start your seedlings off in used food containers or cut the top off milk cartons. You could try growing herbs in old yoghurt pots, or growing salad in ice cream tubs. The only thing to remember is that you might need drainage, so make some small holes in the bottom and place the pot on a plate to catch water.

**Compost:** Sometimes you'll be able to find free or cheap compost on Facebook marketplace, Gumtree or Freecycle, or ask around your community.

In Bristol, as well as the big DIY stores, we have several really good independent garden centres that sell compost and a whole lot more, such as [Riverside Garden Centre](#) in Southville, The Garden Shop in Henleaze (tel 0117 962 0418), [Brackenwood Plant and Garden Centre](#) in Abbots Leigh and [Almondsbury Garden Centre](#).

# ACTIVITIES

Growing food is certainly one of the most active things you can do when it comes to getting more involved with food!

We've put together a few useful tools to help you plan your growing and get the most out of your space, whatever size it is!

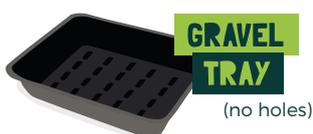
- [Growing From Seed](#) – tips on propagating your plants from seed, from Incredible Edible Bristol.
- [What, When and Where Can I Sow It](#) – a guide to when to sow seeds across the year.
- [Monthly Planting Planner](#) – a handy template from My Frugal Home.
- [Square Foot Planting Table](#) – a template to plan how many plants you can get in per square foot, also from [My Frugal Home](#).
- [Garden Plan Worksheet](#) - finally, use this guide to plan what's going to go where, also from My Frugal Home!

If you want to reprint one of these pages you can find them all at

[www.bristolbitesbackbetter.co.uk](http://www.bristolbitesbackbetter.co.uk)



CROP	SOW INDOORS	CONTAINER TYPE	SOW OUTDOORS	TEMP °C	OTHER TIPS
Artichoke, Globe	Mid Feb – Mid Mar	Cells in gravel trays		18	Pot on into modules or pots
Artichoke, Jerusalem			Mid Mar – early May		Tubers not seed
Aubergine	Mar	Cells in gravel trays		21	Pot on into modules or pots
Bean, Broad	Mid Jan – mid Feb	Loo rolls or bio pots	Mid Feb – end Mar		Transplant roll/bio pot outdoors
Bean, French	Mid Jan – mid Feb	Loo rolls or bio pots	Early May – end Jun	18	Transplant roll/bio pot outdoors
Bean, Runner	Early Apr – early May	Loo rolls or bio pots	Mid May – early Jun	18	Transplant roll/bio pot outdoors
Beetroot	Mid Feb – mid Mar	Cells in gravel trays	Mid Mar – end Jun		Easier to space out if in cells
Broccoli, Calabrese	Mid Feb – mid Mar	Seed trays	Late Mar – early May	18	Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Broccoli, Purple Sprouting	Mid Feb – mid Mar	Seed trays	Mid Mar – mid May	16	Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Brussel Sprouts	Late Jan – early Feb	Seed trays	Mid Feb – end Feb	16	Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Cabbage, Summer	Mid Feb – end Mar	Seed trays	Late Mar – early May	16	Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Cabbage, Winter	Mid Feb – end Mar	Seed trays	Late Mar – early May	16	Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Cabbage, Spring	Mid Mar – end May	Seed trays	Late Jun – late Aug	16	Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Carrot			End Feb – end Jun		Needs stone free sandy soil
Cauliflower	Early – late Jan	Seed trays	Late Apr – late May	18	Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Celeriac	Mar	Seed trays	Mid May – mid Jun	18	Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Celery	Early Mar – mid May	Seed trays	Early May – mid Jun	18	Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Cucumber	Early Mar – late Apr	Cells in gravel trays	May	21	Pot on into pots
Kale	Early Apr – mid May	Seed trays	Early May – mid Jun	18	Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Kohl Rabi			Early Apr – mid Jul		
Leek	Early Jan – mid Feb	Deep seed trays	Late Feb – mid Apr	18	Plant out seedlings in Jun
Lettuce	Mid Jan – end Aug	Seed trays	Mid Mar – end Jun	16	Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Marrow	Apr	Modules	May	21	Plant out in Jun
Onion – spring planted					Easier to plant out sets in Apr/May
Onion – over wintering					Easier to plant out sets in Sep/Oct
Pak Choi	Early Mar – late Apr	Seed trays	Mid Apr – early Jul	16	Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Parsnip			Early Mar – mid May		Needs stone free sandy soil
Pea	Early Jan – late Feb	Cells in gravel trays	Early Mar – early Jun		Easier to plant out if in cells
Pepper	Mid Feb – end Mar	Cells in gravel trays			Pot on into larger pots
Potato – early			Plant out tubers in Mar or Sept		Earth up as leaves appear
Potato – main crop			Tubers in early Apr – mid May		Earth up as leaves appear
Radish			Early Mar – early Aug		Sow in drills of fine soil
Spinach	Late Feb to mid Mar	Seed trays	Mid Mar – early Aug		Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Swede	Early Apr to late May	Seed trays	Early May – late Jun		Transplant to cells in gravel trays
Sweetcorn	Apr	Loo rolls or bio pots	May	21	Transplant roll/bio pot outdoors
Tomato, Outdoor	Early Mar to mid Apr	Cells in gravel trays		21	Pot on into larger pots
Tomato, Indoor	Early Feb to late Mar	Cells in gravel trays		21	Pot on into larger pots
Turnip			Mid Mar – late Aug	16	Sow in drills of fine soil



# What can I sow? When can I sow it? Where can I sow it?

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Sowing times are a guide only and will vary depending on your region, and the weather.

## Suitable for

-  Indoors or under glass
-  Direct
-  Windowsill

-  When to sow
-  When to harvest
-  All year round as a salad leaf

Variety	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Artichoke												
Asparagus												
Asparagus Pea												
Aubergine												
Basil												
Bean Broad												
Aquadulce Claudia												
Bean Broad												
Bean Climbing												
Bean Dwarf												
Bean Runner												
Beetroot												
Broccoli (Calabrese)												
Broccoli Sprouting												
Brussels Sprout												
Cabbage (Spring) April												
Cabbage Summer												
Cabbage Winter												
Cabbage Greens												
Carrot												
Cauliflower												
Celeriac												
Celery												
Chicory*												
Chinese Leaves												
Corn Salad												
Lambs Lettuce*												
Courgette												
Cress												
Cucumber												
Endive*												
Gherkin												
Golden Berry												
Herb Basil												
Herb Borage												
Herb Chervil*												
Herb Chives												
Herb Comfrey												
Herb Coriander*												
Herb Dill*												
Herb Lemon Balm												
Herb Lovage												
Herb Oregano												
Herb Parsley*												
Herb Rocket*												
Herb Rosemary												
Herb Sage												
Herb Thyme												
Kale*												
Kohl Rabi												
Leek												
Lettuce Winter Gem												
Lettuce All Year Round												
Lettuce												
Mangetout Peas												
Marrow												
Melon												
Mustard												
Onion Supasweet™												
Onion Hi-Keeper												
Pak Choi*												
Parsnip												
Pea												
Pea Meteor												
Pepper												
Pumpkin												
Radicchio*												
Radish												
Rhubarb												
Salad Leaves*												
Sorrel*												
Schorzonera												
Shallots												
Spinach*												
Spinach Perpetual												
Spring Onion												
Spring Onion Winter												
Sprouting Seeds												
Squash												
Strawberry												
Swede												
Sweet Corn												
Swiss Chard*												
Tomato												
Turnip												
Watercress*												



# Square Foot Planting Guide

How many can you plant per square foot?

Plant	one	four	nine	sixteen
asparagus	one			
basil (large)	one			
basil (small)		four		
beets (large)			nine	
beets (small)				sixteen
bok choy		four		
broccoli	one			
cabbage	one			
carrots				sixteen
cauliflower	one			
celery	one			
chives	one			
cilantro		four		
collard greens	one			
corn	one			
cucumbers	one			
dill	one			
drying beans		four		
eggplant	one			
fava beans		four		
fennel	one			
garlic		four	nine	
ginger	one			
green beans (bush)			nine	
green onions				sixteen
gourds	one			
head lettuce	one			
kale	one			
kohlrabi		four		
leaf lettuce		four		
leeks			nine	
lima beans			nine	
marigolds		four		
mustard greens	one			
nasturtiums	one			
okra	one			
onions (medium)			nine	
onions (storage)		four		
oregano	one			

Plant	one	four	nine	sixteen
parsnips				sixteen
parsley	one			
peas, garden			nine	
peas, sugar			nine	
peppers	one			
potatoes	one			
radishes				sixteen
rosemary	one			
rutabagas		four		
sage	one			
savory	one			
soybeans		four		
spinach			nine	
strawberries	one			
sunflowers	one			
sweet potatoes	one			
swiss chard		four		
thyme	one			
tomatoes	one			
turnips			nine	

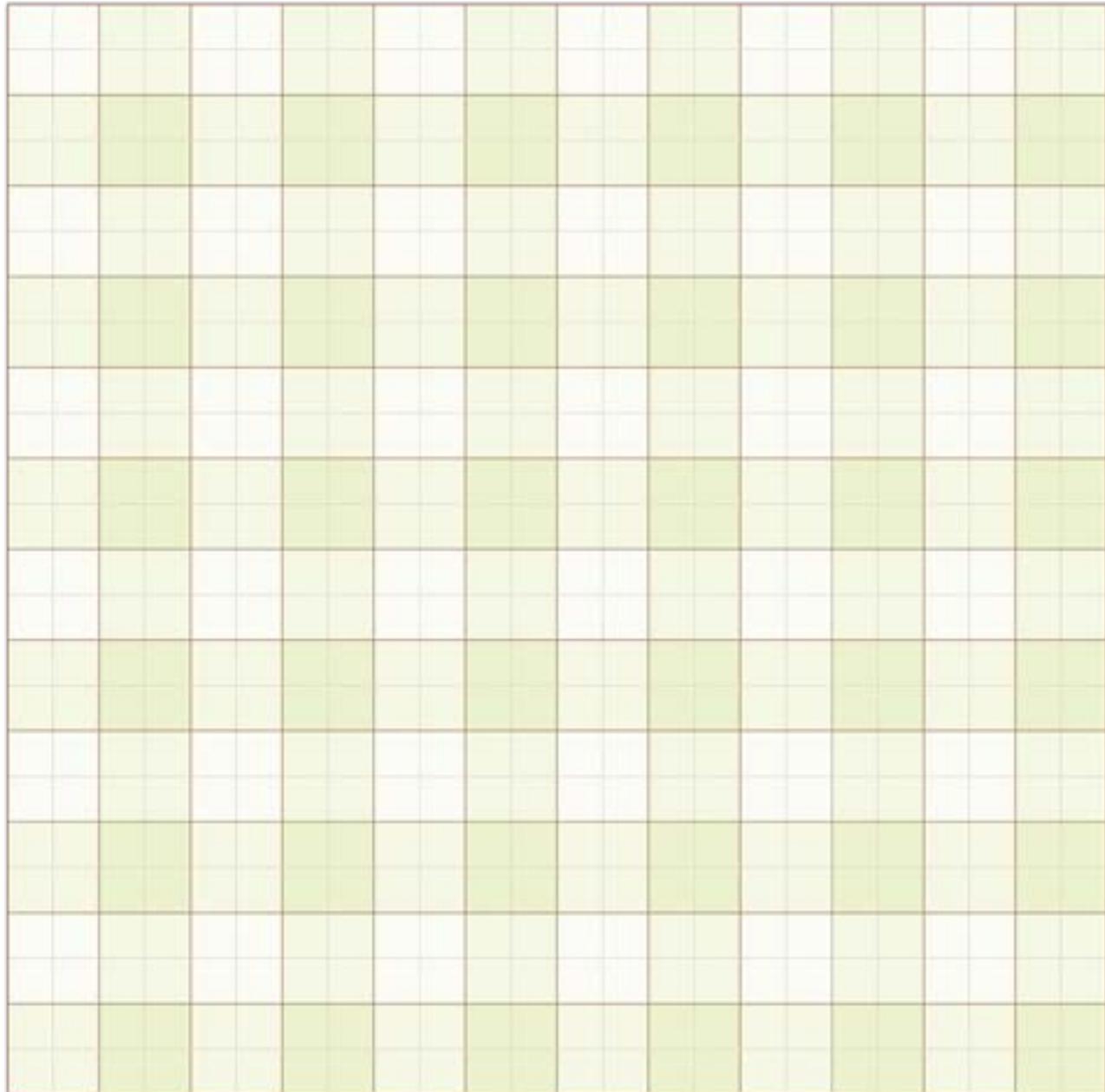
## Squash and Melons

These plants need room to spread out. Plant one per square foot, with a shared trellis or cage for every two plants (or two squares), to keep them from invading other squares.

 <p>two plants in two square feet with a shared trellis or cage</p>
cantaloupe
pumpkins
summer squash
watermelon
winter squash
zucchini

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Use this simple template to plan your garden.  
Use each square to represent any size you designate—  
2 feet, for example—depending on the size of your garden.  
Label plants A,B,C, etc., and fill in the key below.



# Garden Plan Worksheet

- |                 |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| A _____ x _____ | H _____ x _____ | O _____ x _____ |
| B _____ x _____ | I _____ x _____ | P _____ x _____ |
| C _____ x _____ | J _____ x _____ | Q _____ x _____ |
| D _____ x _____ | K _____ x _____ | R _____ x _____ |
| E _____ x _____ | L _____ x _____ | S _____ x _____ |
| F _____ x _____ | M _____ x _____ |                 |
| G _____ x _____ | N _____ x _____ |                 |

## NEXT LEVEL

A really good way to get started is find out what other people are doing. Share ideas and tips with your friends and family and let us know if you find out anything particularly useful, on our website and beyond.

### Join a community growing project

Though many may be closed or operating a limited service during the pandemic, have a look at our [Get Growing map](#) and follow up with individual groups to see what is happening. - [www.bristolfoodnetwork.org/get-growing-map](http://www.bristolfoodnetwork.org/get-growing-map)

### Apply for an allotment

There are lots of sites around Bristol and you never know what might crop up.

### Start your own community growing project

If you're interested in setting up a community food growing space you will need other local people to want to get involved as well. Talk to neighbours, parents and carers at the school gates, faith groups, school and youth groups to get people involved.

### More useful advice

There is a wealth of information online, in the form of courses, wiki know how and YouTube videos, magazine articles and more. Some useful websites include:

[Incredible Edible Network](#)

[Incredible Edible Bristol](#)

[Farm Garden](#)

Explore films, such as [From Seed: Land and Freedom](#), from Real Food Media for some more inspiration.



**TOGETHER WE CAN  
#BITEBACKBETTER**

