



sown in succession to keep the modest plot working as hard as possible. A real treat comes from two bags of 'Charlotte' potatoes, which make a temporary 'shrub' adding height at the back of the plot. Once these were harvested there was then more room for the next planting.

No opportunity is missed, so there are four hanging baskets with tumbling tomatoes and flowers such as marigolds and petunias to encourage bees and predatory insects. Vee's proudest achievement? The creation of a space that not only gives a great outlook but provides something for the family to eat every day.

Vee shows just what can be done in even the tiniest of plots with severe limitations. The *Grow it!* team wish Vee, who wins a Home Allotment collection from Burgon & Ball, all the best for the next growing season.



The neighbours' view

Your Plot 2010

Last issue we revealed the overall winner of our Your Plot competition. This month we bring you some of the best container and small raised bed plots to amaze and inspire

This year's Your Plot competition revealed some very impressive and often ingenious kitchen gardens. Necessity is the mother of invention and in the case of space-constrained gardens this means making the best use of every square inch of space whilst growing upwards as well as outwards. So this month we're showing you just a few of the best container and smaller raised bed plot entries that we received. It just goes to prove that no matter how small the area you have available to grow edibles, there's always some way of growing what you want.

No more is this true than with our winner of the Best Container Plot category, Vee Wilkinson. Vee started her plot in

frustration – the waiting list for an allotment wasn't moving in her native Newcastle Upon Tyne, so itching to enjoy the delights of home-grown goodies she used the only space available to her: a balcony. It's the perfect sunny and sheltered, if restricted space that has to look respectable for the neighbours. The balcony is also the main view from Vee's lounge.

Planning the plot involved working out how to incorporate flowers and food, balancing what would look and taste good while giving the highest yield. Suitable veg therefore include pretty 'Bright Lights' chard, dwarf runner beans with their delicate orange and white flowers, beetroot with their red veins and cut-and-come-again spinach, salad leaves, pak choi and radish, which are

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Vee Wilkinson gets to spruce up her balcony plot courtesy of Burgon & Ball. She wins two window box planters, a rectangular herb planter, two rectangular salad planters, three vegetable planters (pictured), plus two rectangular potato planters. Also included in the prize are two grow bag covers, complete with cane supports, plus two salad and herb vertical planters, giving a total prize value of over £240! To find out more about Burgon & Ball's wide selection of gardening tools and accessories, including their range of attractive Home Allotment planters, visit www.burgonandball.com or call them on 0114 2338262.



Waste not

The area to the side of Elaine Roberson's Berkshire garage was once a wasted space so, with the help of a local gardener, she decided to excavate it and landscape it with slate chippings to form the base to her 'Potallotment'. Space was left for two small raised beds and a 1.8x1.2m (6x4ft) lean-to greenhouse.

Other than those in raised beds all of

Elaine's crops are grown in containers or tubs but it is the peas that she is most proud of. Large tubs of 'Kelvedon Wonder' and 'Onward' successfully screen an oil tank while offering a very prolific harvest with enough to freeze. Soft fruits have been something of a challenge, however, mainly as a result of muntjac deer that decimated the strawberry plants. Luckily they recovered to give a fine crop.



New-found hobby

Emma Seward's garden in Blaenau Gwent has always been a safe haven for her three children to play in, with planting restricted to just one border. But this year Emma decided to try growing food for the first time, so with the help of her father a raised bed was built, filled with compost and the pragmatic stance taken that any crop would be a bonus! As well as beetroot, spring onions, carrots and radish, the bed contains herbs such as chocolate mint, lemon thyme and

chives, and pollinator-friendly flowers such as borage and marigold. The first season has been a first-rate success with everything growing in abundance. Emma's smitten by her new-found hobby and already has plans to expand as her children grow up.



Beds of bounty

For Susan Edwards, nothing beats the taste of home-grown produce. Her Norfolk plot consists of pots of courgettes, butternut and 'Stripetti' squashes, tomatoes, cucumbers, dwarf beans and even onions, while four double-height raised beds grow salads, climbing beans and root crops. Companion plants of pot marigold and nasturtium attract beneficial insects. In just one year Susan's turned a rubble-strewn new-build plot into a fertile paradise that keeps her in fruit and veg throughout the summer.



Cheating the seasons

The season may be short in Moray, northeast Scotland, but that doesn't stop Jacqui Marshall from getting the most from her three square-metre raised beds. To get ahead, seeds are raised under cover so that they can be planted out when conditions allow, and cloches and fleece offer protection. Careful planning and successive sowing are vital to make the best use of space: planting plans and sowing charts help with this. Horse manure and home-made compost aid fertility and liquid seaweed is applied monthly. A helpful toad is in residence!

Jacqui's repertoire of crops includes various salad leaves, outdoor cucumbers, chard, garlic, autumn and spring cabbages, 'Tuscan' kale, dwarf beans, strawberries and, this year, leeks for eating young. Pots of flowers and herbs add a riot of colour and lend their aroma to the plot, while Alpine strawberries, Moroccan mint, pennyroyal and thyme grow in spaces between slabs. And even though space is severely limited there's always plenty to go round, with spare produce shared among friends and family or used in chutneys to enjoy all year round.



Chicken run salads

The lack of space in Shelly and Tom Atton's garden, combined with the tendency of their chickens to eat everything in sight inspired the Somerset couple to come up with an ingenious solution: a chicken run rooftop salad bar! This has effectively doubled the couple's area of productivity without encroaching on their children's play area. Crucially, it keeps the crops free of pests such as slugs – and chickens and children. It's a full cycle, as the chicken's manure is used to make liquid feed, while they in turn are fed the spinach and chard they help to grow (giving deep-yellow eggs rich in omega-3). Anything that holds compost is used as a salad crop container: washing up bowls, enamel buckets, old watering cans, as well as traditional pots. It all makes for a cheery and productive potted plot.



Barrow boy

We love this idea! It comes courtesy of Kim Clarke of Devon whose son Zac rescued some old, rusting wheelbarrows. In them he's growing onions, beetroot, lettuce, strawberries and cabbage. We're pretty sure he'll get carried away with his portable kitchen garden!