

# Food for Thought Newsletter

## May

As the weather warms up, it's full steam ahead on the veg plot. If it's all getting a bit out of hand, stop planting seeds and just look after those which you already planted. Getting a rota for lunch or breaktime watering or early morning time is an ideal way to help children take responsibility for looking after the plot and 4pt milk containers with the lids on are ideal ways to get water from your classroom sink to the plot without spilling it everywhere in the school.

### Jobs for outside

Potatoes in bags

Use compost in your heap

### What you can grow

Plants in pots

Jobs for outside

If they are big enough, plant out any plants you grew on the windowsill indoors. Water the hole you are putting them in then 'puddle them in' with water after covering the roots with soil. If they are climbing plants or going to grow tall then use bamboo stakes to hold them up. Make sure they are tall enough not to poke your eye when bending down or put a yoghurt pot on the top of sticks to protect your eyes. Have quick ten-minute plant care sessions if possible twice a week where your whole class weeds, waters and cares for plants – you will be amazed how much a class can achieve in just ten minutes.



Two hours of seed planting in April have yielded over a hundred small plants to put in the vegetable garden. Most were grown from large seeds which children can handle easily

### What you can grow

Here are some ideas for you if you want to keep your growing going.

Most seeds can be planted now. Check spacing and depth and use a string line and label.

If you haven't planted potatoes in bags, it's not too late to put them in the soil. Check out our DDE video to help you with this. You can also put your potatoes in a very large pot.

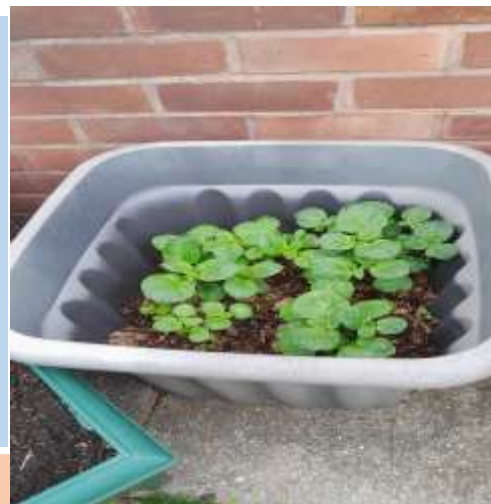
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atK1k0G2rjk>

Keep strawberries well-watered as they will be showing signs of flowers now. Pick off any dead leaves and put straw or shredded paper round them to hold the flowers off the soil.

### Potatoes in bags

Any you have grown will now be about 10cm tall. Gradually and gently cover up all but the top 3cm of leaves with compost and keep damp but not waterlogged.

These potatoes are waiting to be earthed up by putting on more grass clippings or compost. Their roots in the soil mean they don't have to have top quality compost



### Plants in pots

Pots are dependent on you for water; damp not drowned is key here. If it hasn't rained for a few days, give them a good watering. Children with 1:1 are brilliant at taking responsibility for a special task like this. A classroom rota is also a good idea. Teachers are already super busy and children thrive on the responsibility.



### Use compost in your heap

There may be usable compost in the bottom of your heap if you scrape off the top layer; this may have a very rough texture but is ideal for topping off your potatoes both in bags and in the ground. Grass clippings are also very useful for 'earthing up' your potatoes.

### Very Speedy seeds

If you haven't yet managed to plant anything—top seeds for speedy results are:

- ♦ Sweetcorn (plant in a block, not a row)
- ♦ Potatoes
- ♦ French beans
- ♦ Runner beans

Beans will be ready to harvest before the end of the July term. Potatoes and sweetcorn can be cropped in September when you come back.