

So, you want an allotment?

You don't have to wait to grow food A guide to get you growing

Growing food in our communities is becoming increasingly popular and important for our health and wellbeing. It also supports practical action on climate and nature and builds community resilience. Allotments are one way to grow food; however, signing up for a plot almost always involves a wait, exacerbated by a surge in demand and pressure on public finances and land.

As of March 2026



211 allotment sites circa
6,300 plots,
in Scotland



Waiting times
vary from
**months to
many years**



Allotments

Typically offer food-growing opportunities for individuals, although some sites have community plots where groups share a growing space. Plot holders are required to pay an annual fee, adhere to site specific growing and management guidelines, and participate in wider allotment community activity.



Some allotment sites are run by the local authority, while others are managed independently by community committees. Note that joining a local authority waiting list does not necessarily place you on the list for all sites in your area—check your local authority website for more information.



Plot sizes can vary, to help ease demand and waiting times, consider requesting a size that suits your needs. A standard **250sqm** plot typically requires a **minimum of 4-5 hours per week**, with **more time needed in the summer months**.

“Allotments offer such an amazing resource. We don't just grow food; we also act as stewards of the land in a range of ways, from welcoming visitors to planting for biodiversity and raising funds for site upkeep.”

“I have social anxiety, my plot is a haven that helps me get out on difficult days. Working with nature and alongside other allotmenters really helps.”

“I realised that, with my other commitments, I couldn't manage a full-sized plot, so I accepted the offer of a smaller plot, half the standard size, which is manageable for me.”

Other ways to grow locally while you wait



Community growing spaces

Community growing spaces come in all shapes and sizes and can be found in parks, housing areas or on shared community land. They provide opportunities to grow food, connect with nature, and grow with others. Management of the space and delivery of the activities is shared, with people learning, planning, and organising tasks together. Some sites combine shared and individual growing spaces, while others also act as hubs that support wider community activities.

“I’m learning to grow with a garden group close to home, whilst I wait for an allotment plot to become available.”



Home gardens, balconies and windowsills

Gardens, balconies, and even sunny windowsills offer untapped potential for growing food at home. Sharing a garden, back green, or other outdoor space with neighbours can be a great way to make use of available land while working and learning together. Some organisations also help connect people who have space with those who want to grow.

“I gave up my allotment when I saw how long the waiting list was. It’s been an adjustment, but I’m now growing successfully at home and giving someone else the opportunity.”



Community market gardens and farms

Some groups grow food on a larger scale through community farms or community market gardens. These projects can have paid staff and volunteers working to grow food for distribution in the community. Larger growing sites, including polytunnels and fields, enable groups to produce vegetables for distribution and sale in greater quantities while improving their community, connections and resilience.

“We grow together and share the harvest — it’s about feeding our community as much as learning new skills.”

Interested in starting a community growing site near you?

Reach out to others in your community. For inspiration on what’s possible, visit www.getgrowingscotland.org and contact us for help and guidance on next steps—from finding and accessing land to forming a group and getting started.

If you want to grow food, questions to ask yourself

- Is an allotment my only option?
- Can I grow food in my own garden?
- Is there a collective growing space near me?
- How long will I wait for an allotment?
- Do I have the time to commit to an allotment?
- Can I ask for a smaller plot?
- Could there be any unused land in my local area to start a growing space?

