



16th March 2026

British Garden Centres' ultimate guide to start your spring gardening

Spring is the ideal time to start exploring gardening, whether you are starting your first garden or adding to an existing space. The team at British Garden Centres are supporting gardeners with its “Make it Bloom” campaign, which provides inspiration and practical advice for growing plants this spring. If you want to get started and don't know how, check out our guide on how to establish a spring garden easily and at your own pace.

Top tips for starting out

Soil: Good soil forms the foundation for gardening. It is worth spending a little time preparing the soil with compost, manure, or organic matter, which will help support plant growth. If you would like to understand your soil better, garden centres sell simple soil test kits that show pH levels and nutrient content. However, many gardeners start successfully without testing, simply by adding compost to their beds, so you can start your spring garden straight away.

Light and water: When planning where to place your garden, think about light and water. Most vegetables and flowers benefit from about 6 hours of sunlight daily, so planting position is important. A convenient water source like a water butt nearby makes watering easier but is not essential as you can use a watering can. Taking a little time to observe your space throughout the day can help you identify the best spots for your plants.

Plant choice: Choosing plants suited to your area helps improve your chances of success. Spring is a natural season for growing cool weather crops such as lettuce, peas and spinach. Many spring plants are fairly adaptable, and your local garden centre can offer suggestions for what grows well in your area.

Easy vegetables for spring

Spring vegetables are particularly forgiving for gardeners new to growing their own food. Lettuce, spinach and kale grow quickly, typically ready within 6 -8 weeks of sowing. Simply sow seeds directly into the soil, keep the ground moist, and harvest outer leaves as the plant grows, encouraging it to produce more.

Peas are another pleasant spring crop; sugar snap and peas grow when sown 1 inch deep and mature in about 3 months. They can be trained on supports if you enjoy vertical growing.



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If you prefer quick results, radishes are rewarding, maturing in just 4 weeks with minimal fuss beyond loose soil and regular watering when direct sown in early spring. Carrots and tomatoes take a bit longer and grow in 3-4 months but need little attention once the seedlings have grown; sow directly in loose, well-prepared soil, thin them out as they develop, and keep the soil moist. Early bean varieties also thrive in spring when sown directly into the soil with regular watering. This variety of crops means you can enjoy fresh produce over several weeks in the summer months.

Easy flowers for spring

Spring flowers bring colour and attract pollinators at a time when gardens feel fresh and new. Few sights herald the season quite like cherry blossom, its fleeting clouds of pink and white a reminder that the best things in a garden are worth waiting for. Equally dependable, camellias offer glossy evergreen foliage and sumptuous blooms in shades from palest blush to deep crimson, perfect for a sheltered spot or a large pot against a sunny wall.

Potted daffodils and tulips are reliable bulbs that return year after year once planted in the soil now, with little fuss needed. Pansies and violas are hardy flowers in many lovely colours that thrive in hanging baskets, containers and beds. They benefit from having their dead flowers removed, which encourages them to keep blooming.

For a blaze of early colour, wallflowers are hard to beat as their warm, spicy scent on a mild March day is one of the quiet pleasures of the cottage garden. Forsythia, too, earns its place, erupting in a burst of bright yellow before most other shrubs have stirred, and looking wonderful cut and brought indoors.

Antirrhinum plants, often called snapdragons, come in various heights and colours and can be grown from seeds or young plants in well-drained soil with regular watering. Calendula, cyclamen and cornflowers are pleasantly low maintenance and can be sown directly in early spring; they often self-seed the following year, returning without any replanting needed. Primroses deserve a special mention as they bloom early in the season, they cope beautifully with shade and thrive in consistently moist soil, their cheerful faces providing instant colour at a time when the garden needs it most.

Where to start in the garden

Begin your gardening journey by looking at what space you have available. Whether you have a large garden, a small patio, or even a sunny windowsill, there are many ways to grow plants. Traditional flower beds offer plenty of space



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and are a good choice if you enjoy digging and preparing soil. Starting small can be a comfortable way to begin without feeling overwhelmed.

Raised beds are another option, offering better control over soil conditions and requiring less bending down. They also warm up nicely in spring. For those working with limited space, containers provide a flexible solution and can be moved around easily.

What tools do I need?

You do not need a lot of equipment to start gardening. A spade and a hand trowel are useful for preparing soil and planting. For watering, a simple watering can or hose works well; if you have a larger area, you might consider drip irrigation systems later on.

As your garden grows, shovels, forks, hoes for weeding help with maintenance, and pruners and shears are useful for keeping plants tidy, and plant food to keep your garden thriving. To protect yourself while working outdoors, a pair of gloves, a hat and some sunscreen in the summer are essential.

Julian Palphramand, Head of Plants at British Garden Centres, said: "Spring is an enjoyable time to explore gardening, and it's not as daunting as you think. With a few simple tools and plants suited to your space, you can create an outdoor area that brings pleasure all through the season. Whether you grow vegetables, flowers or a combination of both, taking things at your own pace makes the experience more rewarding."

Visit your local British Garden Centres store for seeds, plants, tools and friendly advice or shop online at www.britishgardencentres.com

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Notes to Editors: About the business: British Garden Centres (BGC) is the UK's largest family-owned garden centre group with 78 centres around the country. The group is owned and led by the Stubbs family, who also own and operate Woodthorpe Leisure Park in Lincolnshire.

BGC was launched in 1990 with the opening of Woodthorpe Garden Centre by brothers Charles and Robert Stubbs. Since 2018, it has expanded rapidly with the acquisition of 50 garden centres, allowing it to grow from its heartland to the business it is now, with 78 garden centres spread from Carmarthen to Ramsgate, Wimborne to East Durham.



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The group has a team of 3,500 colleagues working across the garden centres, restaurants, 2 growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres and Woodthorpe Leisure Park and Woody's Restaurant & Bar.

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