

Ready, set, grow!

LINDA MACKIE



Small animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs LOVE fresh greens to eat. So why not grow your own, right at home? You don't need a huge backyard – a balcony, a porch or even a windowsill will do.

Where to start

Just head to your local garden centre to pick up some seeds. Follow the instructions on the seed packets for how deep to plant them and how much sun and water they'll need.

You can also get plants that have already sprouted. That way, you won't have to wait as long to get harvesting!

What to grow

Herbs and dark, leafy greens are great choices. Try these favourites:

WHEATGRASS

Wheatgrass seeds are sometimes called "wheat berries" but, rest assured, they're seeds! Once planted, they'll sprout quickly and be ready to harvest in about a week. Clip off what you need, and the grass will grow back a second time. Indoors, wheatgrass can be grown at any time of year.

You can also share wheatgrass with your cats!

KALE

Kale is a good source of vitamin C, which is great news for guinea pigs who need this vitamin in their diet. Kale prefers well-drained, fertile soil and plentiful, consistent moisture. Once the plants mature, pick leaves from the bottom up as you need them.

Kale is cold-hardy, so it can be grown outdoors in the winter too.

MINT

Mint is an easy herb to grow, and it smells delicious! It spreads easily and can take over a garden, so you might want to stick to growing it in a pot. Mint does best in partial shade in rich, moist soil. Clip off leaves or sprigs as you need them, and the plant will grow right back.

DANDELIONS

That's right – dandelions! Small animals love them, and growing them is a breeze. Use a pot if your parents aren't keen on the idea of your garden being taken over by these cheerful yellow flowers.

When dandelions are in the white puffball stage, take the seeds and press them gently into the soil. Keep the soil moist. Sow some every two weeks or so for a constant supply of tasty leaves and flowers (both are edible!).

HELP YOUR PETS, HELP THE PLANET

Gardening is not only a great way to help feed your pets, it's awesome for the environment too! Vegetables and herbs can attract beneficial insects, including pollinators such as bees and butterflies.

