GETTING STARTED

You now know all the fun things about soil and what you need to begin growing your own food.

Here are a couple more tips that will help get you started.

FILLING PLANT POTS

Some of the activities in this book will need a plant pot filled with multi-purpose compost.



What to do

1. Scoop or spoon compost into your pot, leaving a 1–2 cm gap at the top. You don't want to fill the pot up to the top, otherwise the water has nowhere to sit and sink through to your plant.
2. Break up any lumps in the compost using your hands. Seeds need fine soil so that they can germinate and reach the surface easily.
3. Gently press the compost down to make sure the surface is level.

SOWING SEEDS

You can sow seeds into filled plant pots or directly into your garden. The seed packets and activities in this book will tell you what to do and how, but here are some basic tips.

- Always read the instructions on the seed packet!
- Water the compost or soil well before sowing seeds.

Small seeds like lettuce and carrots need to be sown 1–2 cm under the surface of the compost, as they grow delicate stems that can only push through a thin layer.





Big seeds like pumpkins and beans need to be buried deep under the surface, 3–4 cm. They need more compost to support their strong stems.

GROW A PIZZA GARDEN

Do you love pizza? Growing fresh, tasty toppings for your own pizza can be super easy. You can grow them in containers, or how about designing your own circular bed in the garden with every pizza wedge shape of soil having a different topping?

Buy small plants or sow your favourite toppings from seed and watch them grow into big healthy plants – it's great fun!

Tasty toppings you could try:

- **TOMATOES** – need a bright, sunny spot, regular watering and feeding.
- **BASIL** – likes lots of sun and regular watering.
- **ROCKET** – needs sunshine for 4–5 hours a day and regular watering.
- **COURGETTES** – need full sunshine, regular watering and feeding.
- **PEPPERS** – love lots of sunshine, regular watering and feeding.

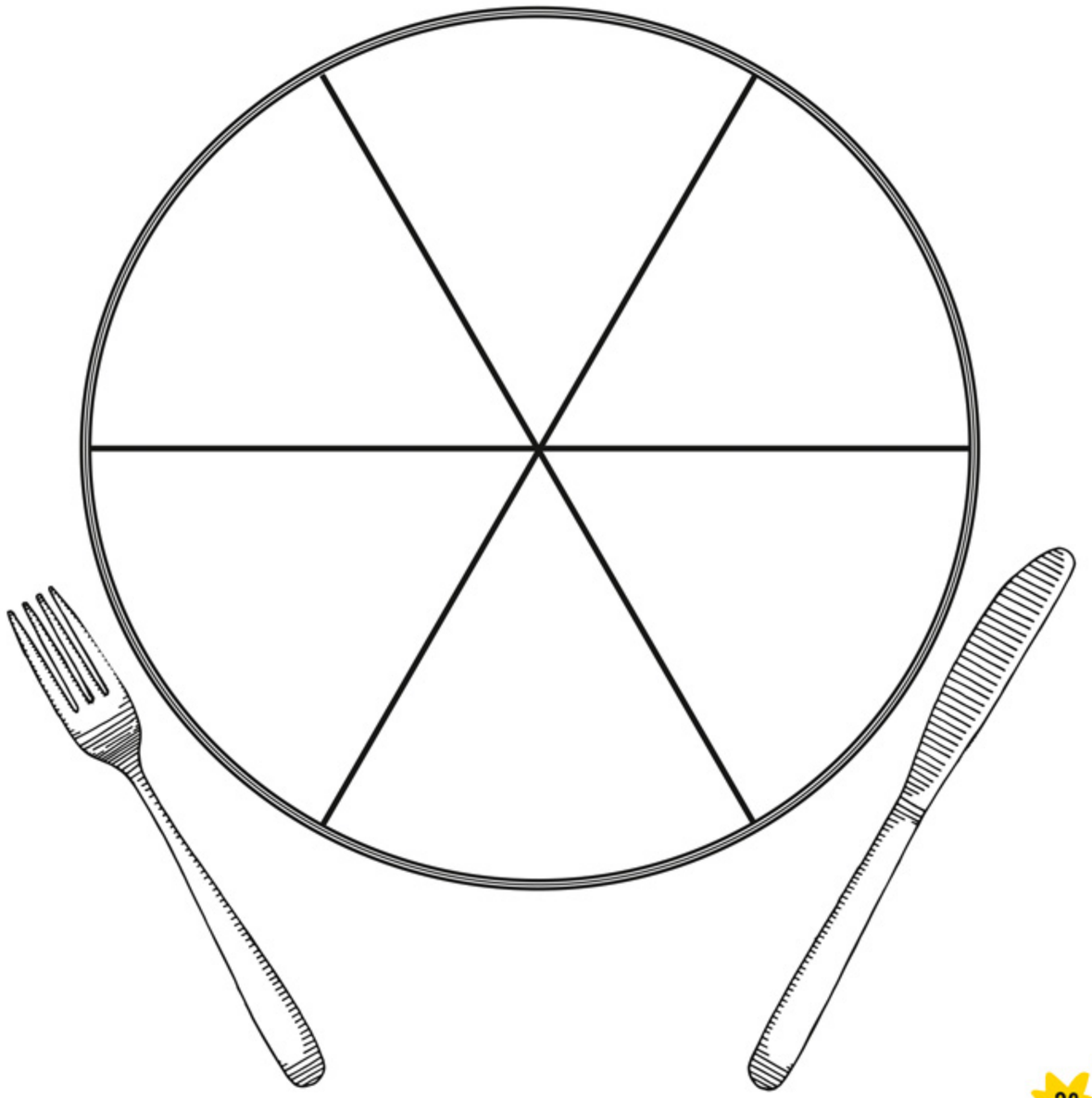
You could also try onions, sweetcorn, oregano, chillies and spinach.

Now it's time to think about your pizza garden. Consider how the different colours, scents and tastes will look together, like bright red tomatoes next to bold green basil. You can also grow purple basil!

DID YOU KNOW?

You can make your own plant feed. Have a look at page 22 for more information.

Design and draw your own pizza garden here.



PUMPKINS

Do you love carving pumpkins for Halloween? Read on to find out how to grow your own giant or mini pumpkins perfect for carving.



GET GROWING!

You can grow pumpkin plants in the ground. They form on really long plants called vines.



The vines grow really big and can produce 2–4 pumpkins per plant.

TIP!

Place a tile, piece of wood or sheet of plastic under your growing pumpkins. This will stop them from rotting.



What to do

1. Pumpkin seeds need warmth to germinate, so start them indoors on a sunny windowsill or in a heated greenhouse. You can also buy small plants from your local garden centre if you don't have space inside.
2. In May, sow 2 seeds per 8–9 cm pot of compost, pushing the seeds about 2 cm deep. Water well!
3. When your plants are big and strong with a few leaves, pop them directly in the ground.
4. If you grow more than one plant, keep them at least 1 metre apart.
5. Water around your pumpkin plants every 2 days. If you want your pumpkin to grow really big, add some tomato feed or your own homemade feed to the watering can every 2 weeks.