

Gardening bug

Organic gardening
for under-12s, with
Gaby Bartai Bevan

Hello!

Is your garden doing well? Have you got enough space for all the things you want to grow? If you haven't, this is a good month to think about making yourself a bigger better garden, while the weather is nice and you want to be outside. How about making a raised bed garden, like Reuben Morgan? Here is his letter.

Dear Bug,

Last year I made a raised flowerbed out of an old leaky metal cattle trough and in it we planted:

- Gypsophila
- Scarlet flax
- 3 sunflowers
- Nemesia
- Hare's tail grass
- Clarkia
- Blue flax
- Rudbeckia
- Siberian wallflower
- Jacob's ladder
- Strawberry plant

This year there is only the perennials remaining - blue flax, rudbeckia, Siberian wallflower, Jacob's ladder and strawberry plant - but they've grown to fill it.

This is the way I made the box:

1. I found an old metal cattle trough and cleaned it up with a wire brush.
2. Painted it black.
3. Filled the bottom of it with muck and weeds and left it for a while to settle.
4. Topped it up with soil.
5. Watered it until it was moist.
6. Finally I sowed the seeds and planted the strawberry and nemesias.

Well, I hope you find my idea interesting.

Reuben Morgan (age 11)



▲ This picture is by Amber Hulse.

Make your own raised bed garden!

I couldn't have explained that better myself. If Reuben would like to write articles for *Organic Gardening* when he grows up, he's got the job!

- First make - or find! - your raised bed. A raised bed is just what it sounds like - a small bed for growing plants in, which is higher than the ground around it. You can buy kits to make mini raised beds, or you could ask your mum or dad to make you a bed out of four boards nailed together - or you could look for a big container to recycle, like Reuben did. Reuben's was already leaky, but if yours isn't, ask a grown-up to make some holes in it so water can drain away.
- Fill your bed or container with compost or a mixture of compost and soil.
- Decide what you are going to grow!
 - ▶ It's a bit late in the summer to sow most sorts of seeds - but you could still sow lettuces, or radishes, or salad leaves like chicory, mizuna or rocket.
 - ▶ You could plant some strawberries, like

Thank you for all your letters and pictures! Here are two really good collage pictures of the gardens you are growing this year. Amber has used pictures cut out of an old copy of *Organic Gardening* to make hers! And I was really happy to get the picture from Yoel, Hannah, Abigail, Elishevah and Esther, because they live in Shetland - like we do!



▲ This picture is by Yoel, Hannah, Abigail, Elishevah and Esther Howard.

Reuben did. If your parents have a strawberry patch, ask if they have any spare runners (these are baby strawberry plants that grow from the main plants on long stalks). Carefully dig them up, cut the stalks that join them to the main plant, and replant them in your own garden.

- ▶ You could plant some overwintering onion sets. 'Sets' are baby onions that will grow into big onions - and 'overwintering' means that these kinds of onions are tough enough to cope with cold weather. You will have onions ready to harvest in May next year - long before most grown-up gardeners have any crops!
 - ▶ You could ask your mum or dad to take you to a garden centre to choose some flowering plants. Then you could plant yourself an instant garden!
- Happy gardening!



Free seeds from The Bug! Everybody who sends me a letter, a photo or a drawing this year will get **SIX FREE PACKETS** of organic seed. We'll send you six sorts of seeds that you can still sow in summertime. Write me a letter telling me about your garden. Or draw me a picture of the garden you are growing this year - or send me a photograph of you in your garden. We'll print all our favourite letters and pictures on this page! Send it to: The Bug, Organic Gardening, Sandvoe, North Roe, Shetland, ZE2 9RY, or email me at gaby@organicgardeningmagazine.co.uk

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