



B4.7 Growing on a windowsill



A windowsill offers a wealth of opportunities for growing a wide range of plants. This invaluable ledge of narrow space is ideal all year round for starting off seedlings and growing smaller plants to maturity. The sunniest windows face south; north is shady, but a window facing in any direction offers opportunities.

What to grow on windowsills

Grow any plants that appreciate the extra warmth are suitable for windowsills. It may be the only place you have to raise seedlings before they move outdoors (after ‘hardening off’ to acclimatise them - see A22). Windowsills also offer a permanent home for herbs such as basil. You could also try vegetables that like warmer growing conditions, eg tomatoes and peppers.

Looking after plants on a windowsill

- Water windowsill plants just as you do for outdoor containers (B4.6, B5.6). In other words, only water as needed by the plant, keeping soil moist but not wet. The most common cause of death for indoor plants is overwatering.
- Keep plants from touching the window surface to avoid leaf damage.
- Because light only comes from one direction, plants tend to stretch towards the light. ‘Even-up’ the growth by regularly turning plants so the other side faces the light. See also Top tip (right).
- Stick a piece of plain white paper onto the window during the middle of the day to protect seedlings from getting ‘scorched’ by hot sun (especially if on a south facing window).

Top tip



Involving people

Run a ‘Grow food on your windowsill’ campaign, encouraging pupils to take home pots of seedlings and herbs for keeping or bringing back to the school garden. Invite parents to help.

Top tip



Deflecting light

Make a simple cardboard pot holder covered in aluminum foil to evenly reflect light so plants grow straight. See A13.

Health & Safety	Keep plants on windowsills away from food preparation areas so that soil/compost and plant debris do not contaminate food. <i>See also Health and Safety Guidelines (Section B3.3)</i>
Activities on DVD	A13 Making a light reflector A18 Sowing seed
Further information	B4.6 Growing in containers B5.6 Watering plants