

## Growing food and friendship

The secret to growing food in your own garden isn't about expert knowledge, space or time – it is about doing it with a group of friends and helping one another get started. Grow Zones, a national community growing project, brings people together locally to help one another grow fruit and vegetables in their own gardens.

The Grow Zones approach is simple. A team gather, share ideas and expertise, and help one another plan their growing season. They then get together for an easy schedule of Saturday morning visits to each others gardens. Everyone brings any useful tools they have for the jobs that morning and something to share for lunch. The host gets everyone to work on tasks they have planned for their garden, and the morning ends with a real sense of accomplishment and a shared meal.

Participants gain new knowledge and learn new skills, enjoying a sense of achievement, new friendships, and a harvest of their own fresh locally grown fruit and vegetables.

Research has shown that despite much talk about 'growing your own' in recent years and the rising cost of food, only about 3 per cent of fruit and vegetables consumed in the UK come from gardens and allotments – and this figure has been relatively constant across the last four years.

Grow Zones teams are springing up all over the country, bringing people together to help one another get growing fruit and vegetables in their own gardens this year. Teams are resourced with the Grow Zones Kit that guides and supports them through the process from start to finish.

Chris Sunderland said: "The Grow Zones Kit has been developed to help teams get



Make friends and gain skills with Grow Zones

organised and growing without necessarily having any expert knowledge. At the beginning the project was a way to get people growing their own food and to introduce permaculture practically, but it has proved to be an amazing friendship and community forming project too. It seems easier for people to make friends over shared work."

"The Grow Zones kit provides people with all they need to start a Grow Zones team – insurance is even included, along with beautifully designed booklets and a DVD."

To order a kit and to find out more about starting a Grow Zones in your area visit [www.growzones.com](http://www.growzones.com)

## Giant 'lemon' at Eden Project

In the February issue of KG we reported on a huge 'lemon'-like fruit being grown at Lackham in Wiltshire. Well it seems this one was not alone. There is another citron fruit doing rather well at the Eden Project in Cornwall, home to the biggest rainforest in captivity. It's *Citrus medica* which grows in the Mediterranean Biome has also produced huge fruits this year. The citron is related to lemons and oranges but unlike other citrus fruits, it contains little or no juice and is made up mostly of a thick white rind.

It is usually grown to make candied peel but is also added to pickles and preserves in South India, Iranian jam as well as fragrant South Korean tea.

Catherine Cutler, Eden's Mediterranean Biome Supervisor, said: "We are really pleased with the citron tree this year. We've had an excellent crop, which is great, because people are always amazed when they see them."

The citron can be found in the Mediterranean Biome's Citrus Grove along with other curious fruits such as the Buddha's Hand (*Citrus medica digitata*) – a relative of the citron with long finger-like sections – and the Limequat (*X Citrofortunella floridana*) – a cross between the key lime and the kumquat.

For more information: [www.edenproject.com](http://www.edenproject.com)



Joe, aged three, sizes up the Eden Project's massive citron fruit grown in Cornwall

## PRODUCT NEWS

### New veg plot watering system

Keeping veg plants watered just got a lot easier thanks to Greenhouse Sensation's new Click & Drip system, which overcomes the particular challenges of watering raised beds and veg plots.

Watering used to mean a choice between lugging around heavy watering cans or doing battle with complicated irrigation systems, but the Click & Drip takes seconds to click together and lay onto a veg plot.

Once the three parts are clicked together, the Click & Drip is simply pushed onto a water butt tap or a garden tap and the dripper pipe is placed on the area to be watered. Turn the tap on or attach a timer and water is released slowly and evenly without fuss.

Water wastage is greatly reduced thanks to the slow drip which gives the soil time to absorb the water rather than forming puddles which then evaporate. Water is released at a rate of 6-litres per hour from a water butt and 33-litres per hour from a mains tap.

The Click & Drip's veg friendly 30cm (12in) spacing between drip holes, the non-drip pipe for use between the tap and area to be watered and the easy-fit extensions which connect individual plots or beds without wasting a drop of water – all make watering fuss free, effective and efficient.

Although it's simple to use, the Click & Drip has been carefully designed. Blockages from limescale, debris and soil are prevented by a combination of a filter attached to the tap and a clever drip hole design which means the pipe can even be covered by mulch or soil without blocking, while the pressure regulator reduces mains tap pressure to a slow, even drip.

Irrigation kits often require gardeners to buy additional fittings, cut lengths of hose pipe and to punch their own dripper holes. With the Click & Drip there are no fiddly fittings, no intimidating instructions and everything you need is included, so gardeners won't find they have to trek back to the garden centre for that forgotten tap connector or length of hose. Price: From £22.90 Size: 10m or 20m (33-66ft). Extensions available [www.greenhousesensation.co.uk](http://www.greenhousesensation.co.uk)



Greenhouse Sensation's Click & Drip system