

Windowsill basil growing

You will need:

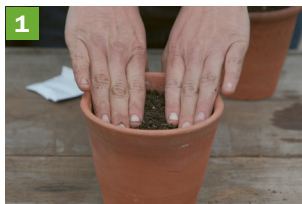
- Pot
- Basil seeds
- Compost
- Watering can



Watch

Watch Kew's Kitchen Gardener, H el ena Dove, guide you through the best way to sow your basil.

youtu.be/a0keUzkXp3Y



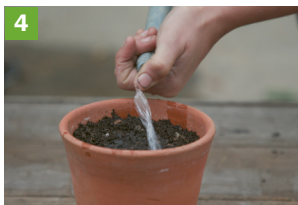
1 Fill your pot with compost and press it down firmly.



2 Take a pinch of your seeds and sprinkle them onto the surface of the compost.



3 Top with a light covering of compost.



4 Water thoroughly until the compost is wet all the way through.



5 Leave on a sunny windowsill to grow.

All about basil

Basil's botanical name is *Ocimum* and it is a member of the mint family (*Lamiaceae*). Basil originally came from tropical Africa and Asia and thrives in warm weather with full sun, lots of air circulation and moisture.

Basil is treated as an annual plant in the UK: growing from seed, flowering, producing seeds and dying back, all in one year. There are many different types (cultivars) of basil. Some taste of lemon, lime or liquorice and others have hints of clove. Cinnamon basil (*Ocimum basilicum* 'Cinnamon')

not only tastes of cinnamon but also contains the same chemicals found in cinnamon bark.

Basil leaves come in a range of shapes and colours, from green to deep purple. Some basil leaves are tiny, like Greek basil (*Ocimum minimum* 'Greek'), while others are as big as a plate, such as lettuce leaf basil (*Ocimum basilicum* 'Lettuce Leaf'). Basil flowers also differ in that they can be small and white or large and purple depending on which type of basil you're growing.

How to use

As small basil leaves appear you can pick and eat these as micro-herbs – they're very tasty. It's worth leaving some of your basil leaves to grow to full size to taste the difference.

Basil leaves are delicious and can be eaten raw or added to cooked food at the last minute. Basil flowers can also be eaten and look lovely when used to decorate savoury and sweet dishes. Pop your basil leaves in salads, on pizzas, in pasta and enjoy!

Why not visit our basil trial in Kew's Kitchen Garden for inspiration? We'll be growing different species and cultivars, comparing taste, appearance and productivity to showcase how diverse this herb is.

A guide to growing healthy basil

Your basil will love a spot on a sunny windowsill.

Water your basil in the morning.

Only water the compost and not the leaves.

If the leaves begin to turn yellow, give your basil a liquid feed.

Pick the side leaves often for a nice bushy plant.

We're passionate about growing plants – and we want you to feel the same! Find out more about Kew's community programmes at [kew.org/learning/community-and-access](https://www.kew.org/learning/community-and-access).

Please share your growing adventure with us! Tag [@KewGardens](https://twitter.com/KewGardens) with photos of your basil.