

A22 Transplanting young plants



You should have vigorous young plants after thinning and potting on seedlings (A20 and 21). Transplanting is the final step to enable plants to grow on to maturity. The aim is to give them enough space to produce a good crop. This activity has instructions for transplanting into the soil and containers (with more details about containers in A11).

Resources

- Young plants in seedbed or pots/trays
- Hand fork or trowel
- Prepared planting space or container
- Sheltered location for hardening off, ideally with cloche, horticultural fleece and/or cold frame



Activity

- 1 Follow instructions on the next page for 'hardening off' young plants, ie avoiding 'transplant shock' by acclimatising plants to the new growing environment
- 2 Follow instructions on the next page for transplanting young plants
 - a From a seedbed into the soil
 - b From pots into the soil
 - c From pots into containers



Health & Safety	Wash hands after handling compost and soil. Be careful when lifting heavy trays and pots. <i>See also Health and Safety Guidelines (Section B3.3)</i>
Further information	A11 Planting in containers B5.5 Transplanting young plants Food Growing Instruction Cards

Instructions for transplanting young plants

Hardening off before transplanting

- 1 Move young plants outdoors to a sheltered, light location during the day and move back indoors at night/after school. Repeat for two weeks, gradually leaving plants outside at night as well, covered with horticultural fleece. Do not leave plants that are damaged by frost outdoors when frost is forecast (eg courgette and sweetcorn; see Food Growing Instruction Cards).
- 2 Alternatively, move plants to
 - A cold frame, a low, glazed, box-like structure with lid
 - A cloche, a portable tunnel structure made of polythene stretched over wire hoop frameLift up the lids or sides during the day and close at night, increasing the exposure to outdoor weather, eventually leaving cold frames open all the time and removing cloches.

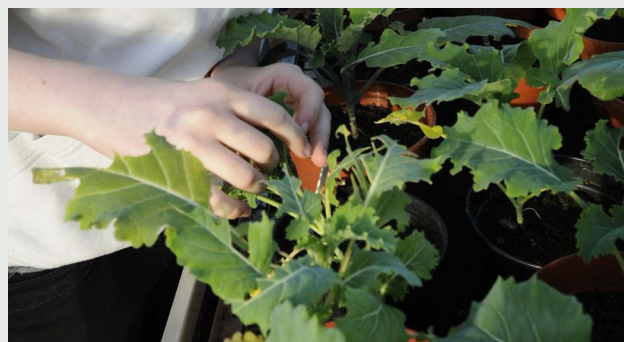


Top tip

Watching for damage



Keep a close eye on your plants for any signs that the change in growing conditions is too sudden and causing damage, such as yellowing leaves; browning of leaf margins/growing tips or slow (if any) growth.



a Transplanting young plants from a seedbed into the soil

- 1 Water plants and then gently dig up plants using a hand fork or trowel. Lift with as much root and moist soil as possible.
- 2 Plant without delay in prepared soil, following steps 3-8 on the next page.



b *Transplanting from pots into the soil*

- 1** Prepare bare soil that has already been dug and organic matter added (if required for your plants). See A9.



- 2** Water plants thoroughly and remove from pots as you plant.

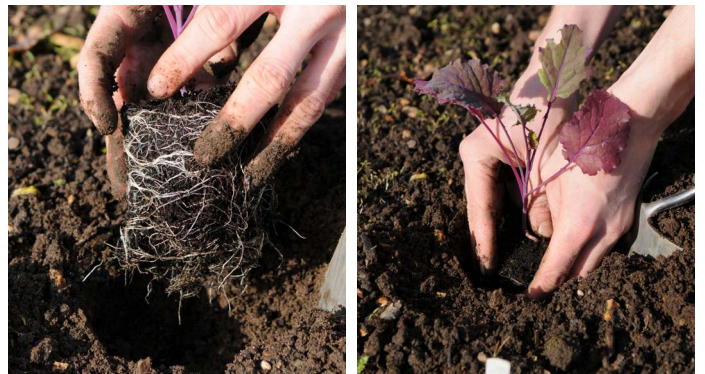


Turn pots over and support the stem with a finger on either side, gently squeezing the sides and bottom of the pot to loosen the root ball so it falls out whole.



For plants in modular trays, push from beneath to loosen the root ball and gently lift out the plant.

- 3** Using a hand fork or trowel, dig a hole big enough for the root ball. Place the root ball in the hole, backfilling and gently firming the soil so there are no air pockets.



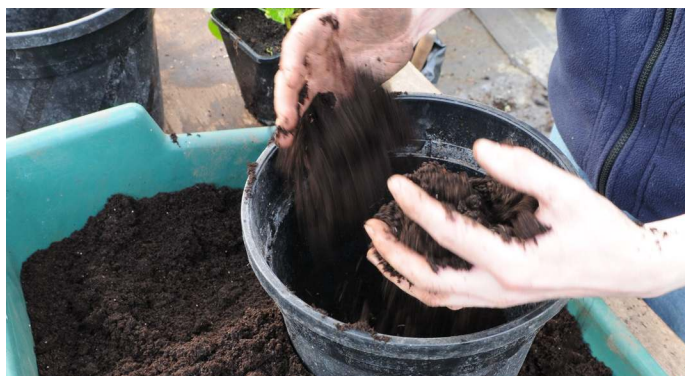
- 4** Plant vegetables so their lowest leaves are just above the soil. Plant others so they are at the same height as in the pot.



- 5** Continuing planting, leaving recommended final space between plants (see seed packet and Food Growing Instruction Cards). Use a hand fork to loosen the soil surface around plants if compacted. Water well.

c *Transplanting young plants from pots into containers*

- 1 Water plants thoroughly and leave them to drain.
- 2 Fill the new pot with organic peat-free potting compost until you reach the same depth as the bottom of the pots you're transplanting.
- 3 To remove plants, turn pots over and support the stem with a finger on either side, gently squeezing the sides and bottom of the pot to loosen the root ball so it falls out whole. For plants in modular trays, push from beneath to loosen the root ball.



- 4 Place the plant in the hole, backfilling and gently firming the compost so there are no air pockets.



The final height of the compost should allow for 2cm gap at the top of the pot for watering. Water well.