

## **Yorkshire urged to be more green-fingered as spring arrives**

The people of Yorkshire are being urged to get to grips with their gardens this spring so that they flourish in summer.

With the start of spring upon us, John Baker, Head of Horticulture at Shipley College says that the art of horticulture is a recession-busting pastime that's suitable for all ages and, if you haven't tried growing anything before, now is the time to have a go.

The college is hoping that being more green-fingered will see the Yorkshire community growing their own fruit and vegetables, encouraging them to lead healthier lifestyles in a fun and interesting way.

To aid the novice gardener, John has unveiled six top tips to get you started and help the most reluctant gardener to achieve their dreams, and even want to consider a career in this field.

"At Shipley College we aim to make horticulture accessible to everyone, as people are often keen to work in the garden, but don't know where to begin" he added.

"Whether the space you have to work with is large or small, there are many plants, fruit and veg that will grow without too much effort. They will really help to brighten the gardens for summer and provide a talking point.

### **1. Tidy up your space**

Before starting any spring gardening, make sure your garden is clean and tidy, and any repairs have been made to fences and trellis that have been damaged by this winter's snow fall.

### **2. Plan**

Write a list of what you want to grow or choose an area to develop this season. List the materials you will need. Friends and family can be a great source for these if you can tell them what you are planning.

### **3. Grow your own**

Are you keen to start growing your own vegetables? Start planting onions sets, and seed potatoes in March and April. Potatoes are particularly easy to grow for beginners, even in patio pots.

### **4. Flowers for summer**

Plant summer-flowering bulbs, such as gladioli, anemone and lilies. These will help to revitalise your garden once spring-flowering plants have finished blooming.

### **5. The dreaded weeds**

Deal with weeds as they start to grow instead of ignoring them. If you keep them under control, in spring, you will save yourself a lot of work later in the year.

### **6. Summer is just around the corner**

Finally, are you looking forward to summer already? Plant Strawberry runners in early April. Keep them well watered until they are fully established in May and you should have strawberries to enjoy with cream when summer arrives.

If this has got you interested, remember Shipley College offers full time courses, apprenticeships and short courses in Horticulture, to find out more visit [www.shipley.ac.uk](http://www.shipley.ac.uk) or call 01274 327222.

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