

GROWING TOGETHER

During 2020 lockdown in India meant real hardship for people in and around Mettupalayam. No work meant no money and people who live from hand to mouth began to go hungry. Food markets closing made the problem worse.

Friends of Mettupalayam (FoM) sent £22,000 of food aid money and Venkat and the school teachers worked very hard to purchase, transport and distribute vegetables and rice to over a thousand families in need.

Now the situation in Tamil Nadu is improving Venkat is keen to stop that level of difficulty happening again. He has come up with the idea of a Kitchen Garden Project where families are going to be encouraged and supported to grow their own vegetables. These will be useful in the case of future lockdowns, will improve levels of nutrition and health and provide the opportunity to learn and share.



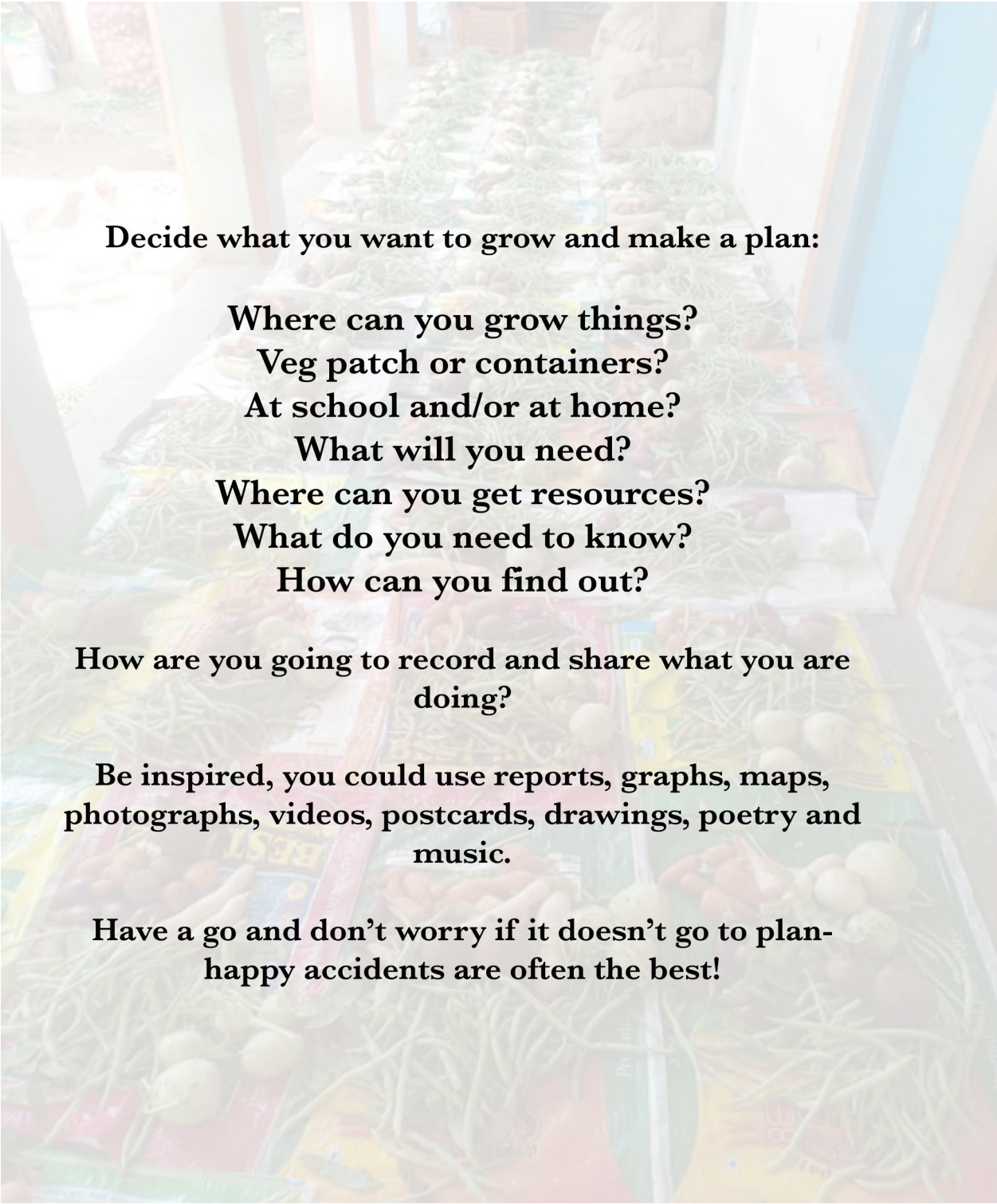


Growing Together is a project that anyone can be involved in on any level.

You could grow Sunflowers, Pumpkins or set a Chilli Challenge. Keep a diary of your progress, explore and experiment the best conditions for growth. Who knows who will grow the tallest, biggest or most productive plants?

It needn't stop there...

Venkat has visited a big Seed Centre in Bangalore and purchased many different kinds of seeds. His plan is to test these out on the farm with the help of the children and see which varieties are best for the soil and climate in the Mettupalayam of Tamil Nadu. In the UK we have friends who are planning to grow; herbs for cooking, salad to cut and eat through the summer, strawberries because they are their daughter's favourite fruit and potatoes in bags because they don't have a garden.



Decide what you want to grow and make a plan:

Where can you grow things?

Veg patch or containers?

At school and/or at home?

What will you need?

Where can you get resources?

What do you need to know?

How can you find out?

How are you going to record and share what you are doing?

Be inspired, you could use reports, graphs, maps, photographs, videos, postcards, drawings, poetry and music.

Have a go and don't worry if it doesn't go to plan- happy accidents are often the best!

An administered 'Growing Together' Facebook page has been created so anyone at home or abroad can post their plans, thoughts and successes.

There are also possibilities to use Zoom or Skype to make connections with India or different schools and settings. All this technology is great to help us make connections and share our enthusiasm for growing and learning.

It would be great if projects could involve a fundraising event for Friends of Mettuplayam and what better way to celebrate success and the produce grown.

A FEW IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED... OF COURSE AS COVID RESTRICTIONS ALLOW.

Plant growing competition with a donation to enter.

Produce Show real or virtual.

Pick your own...

Selling decorated and planted up flower pots.

Afternoon Tea with home made jam and scones or courgette cake and Garden tours.

A Midnight Garden Tour.

Sensory garden Scavenger Hunt.

Soup and sandwich lunch with home made produce.

Curry night.

Recipe cards for surplus crops or gardening hints for sharing.

Fragrant sweet pea posies.

Garden labels and signs, bird scarers, wind chimes and scarecrows.

Pumpkin Day with guess the weight, carving competition and recipes.

Have a market stall.

WHATEVER YOUR GROWING DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS LETS GIVE IT A GO AND SEE WHAT WE CAN GROW TOGETHER IN CONTAINERS, VEG PATCHES, ALLOTMENTS OR FARMS.
I SUSPECT WE WILL HARVEST FAR MORE THAN VEGETABLES AND FLOWERS.

WEBSITES AND USEFUL BOOKS.

irdt.co.uk Friends of Mettupalayam website.

Information on the history and various aspects of the project, links to Facebook pages, Just Donate.

schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk has lots of suggested sessions and activity cards.

gardenorganic.org.uk | nationaltrust.org.uk | soilassociation.org

Jack and the Beanstalk Traditional Tale

Jasper's Beanstalk Nick Butterworth

Jim and the Beanstalk Raymond Briggs

Beans on Toast Paul Dowling

The Gigantic Turnip Traditional Tale

The Little Red Hen Traditional Tale

The Tiny Seed Eric Carle

Ten seeds Ruth Brown

One Child One Seed Kathryn Cave

Oliver's Vegetables Vivian French

I Will Not Ever Never Eat a Tomato Lauren Child

Vegetable Glue Susan Chandler

Eating the Alphabet Lois Ehlert

Plants Can't Sit Still Lois Ehlert

Sticky Jam- The Story of Sugar

The Giant Jam Sandwich Janet Burroway

Pumpkin Soup Helen Cooper

Winnie's Amazing Pumpkin Valerie Thomas and Korky Paul

The World Came To My Place Today Jo Readman and Ley Honor Roberts

Create a fruit and vegetable alphabet.

Find out about composting and create posters

Research where our food comes from and calculate air miles

Create miniature gardens

Grow cress/mustard / Pea shoots
mung beans / bean stalks inside

Encourage wildlife to your garden.

Bird feeding - tables, baths
boxes

Sunflower seed cakes

Nut and berry garlands

Design, plan veg
patches - map to scale

Guess the herbs
growing

Gardening hints + tips.

Gardeners Question Time.

Write to Dr Greenfingers.

Design seed packets for real
or imaginary veg or flowers.

Make labels and signs.

Identify weeds + pests - Wanted
Posters.

Visit a local nursery or
allotment.

Write poems about growing.

Seedling share or swap.

Research and grow
some edible flowers

Create a 5-a-day poster
- What parts of the plant do
we eat?

Use the garden
to inspire art....

Observational drawing /
painting / collage

Natural Weaving

Finger painting / Mark making

Sunflower $\frac{1}{4}$'s



21cm

Circle radius
11cm

Growing Together