



Supporting a culture of environmental sustainability at NIE Issue 10 | May / June 2020

Many of us are learning how to **grow veggies and herbs** at home, which encourages a healthy and more sustainable lifestyle. Get inspired by these urban gardening stories from the NIE community!

**How I got started:** I started growing starfruit after tasting a honey-sweet fruit. The seeds were tossed in a pot in the hopes that they would grow and bear the same sweet fruit and they didn't disappoint. Growing the plant was fuss-free in an HDB corridor. It just needs moderate sunlight and the usual once-a-day watering.

- Patricia Ho, PCHD



### How to grow bean sprouts

Serves 3-4 pax

1. Fill  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a plastic rice cup with green beans. Rinse twice and discard the water.
2. Fill a jug or kettle with 500 ml tap water.
3. Soak the beans for 3-4 hours in the jug. Discard the water.
4. Keep the jug in a dark place and cover it with a cloth or bag to ensure no exposure to sunlight during the growing process (I use a black reusable shopping bag).
5. Give the beans a shower twice daily. (Tip: when changing the water, shake the beans left and right.)
6. Sprouts can be harvested on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> day.

- An NIE colleague

**What I'm growing:** Pandan, basil and celery.

**How I got started:** Learnt from my mum. Plants died. I bought new ones before I got the hang of growing pandan and basil.

**Tip:** Don't be afraid to experiment. My sister talks to her plants and they grew very well :)

- An OER colleague



**How I got started:** I bought some small onions but did not use them all. After some time, the leftover small onions began to sprout green shoots. So I decided to propagate the onions in a flower pot to see what would happen. Voila! I got some luxurious, fresh and organic spring onions to garnish my soup and dishes!

**Tips:** If your small onions look bad, don't throw them away. Add life to these onions. Plunge them into soil, ensure the soil is moist, and wait. You will see spring onions springing upwards! Easy and low maintenance.

- Zoe Boon, PCL

## DID YOU KNOW?

A [2019 study](#) by Princeton University found these emotional benefits of gardening.

- Household gardening is associated with high emotional well-being, similar to biking and walking.
- Vegetable gardening is associated with higher emotional well-being than ornamental gardening
- Household gardening is the only activity where women and low-income participants report the highest emotional well-being

Image source: Princeton Environmental Institute

**Tips:** Thai purple basil (foreground) is easy to plant using the seeds. Sweet leaf aka 'pokok cekur manis' (background) was planted from leftover stems. Both need water to thrive.

- Chiam Ching Leen, OER



**My experience:** Since I live in an HDB flat with little direct sunlight, I am growing plants indoors with grow lights and (mostly) hydroponically. I have only been doing indoor gardening since I returned to Singapore 6 years ago, and have had more failures than successes. Before that, I lived in NZ for 15 years where I grew veggies, herbs, flowers and fruit trees outdoors. I have learnt that indoor gardening is a lot trickier than outdoor gardening.

- Hanin Hussain, PCHD

(Check out her presentation "My Indoor Garden" in the **NIE Home-grown Greens** group! Follow the instructions at the end of this email and navigate to the Files section)

**My experience:** It's been a fantastic journey so far. While I don't think I've saved very much money (haha), the satisfaction of having fresh herbs and vegetables to share with my loved ones is incomparable.

**Interesting moment:** Having a condo auntie look at me as I introduce myself and say "Oh so YOU'RE Brian... I thought you would be an old man."

#### Tips

- To build your competency and confidence, start with your local (or at least Southeast Asian) herbs which are typically tropical plants. E.g. curry leaf, lemongrass, ginger, Thai basil.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help from more experienced growers.
- A good gardener grows his soil. Learn some basics about soil and soil care and execute them.

- Brian Thian, Student

(Gardening Instagram: [@briansgardenadventures](https://www.instagram.com/briansgardenadventures))



**Want more gardening tips and inspiration?** Join the [NIE Home-grown Greens group](#) in Microsoft Teams!



**NParks is giving out free seed packs.** You can read about it [here](#) and register to get some seeds for home gardening!

## Sustainability in the News

- [Greener and cleaner: Reimagining our cities in the wake of COVID-19](#) (Channel NewsAsia, 6 Jun 2020)
- [Singapore households generated additional 1,334 tonnes of plastic waste during circuit breaker: Study](#) (Channel NewsAsia, 5 Jun 2020)
- [Veggies to be grown at more HDB carpark rooftops](#) (The Straits Times, 13 May 2020)
- [NGOs say healthy, natural environment should be a basic human right in light of coronavirus outbreak](#) (The Straits Times, 22 Apr 2020)
- [Nearly a million trees' worth of greenhouse gases offset by solar power from home-grown Sunseap in 2019](#) (The Straits Times, 13 Apr 2020)

### SEEDS FOR THOUGHT

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*"I am small but I can make a difference!"*

- Nathaniel Eng, 3½ years old, "[We Love Our Planet – Voices of our Children](#)"

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#### About Green Clan

Green Clan was formed in 2017. We are an informal group of research, faculty and admin staff interested in sustainability matters and supporting evidence-informed initiatives for sustainability. [Follow us on Facebook](#) | [Join the team](#)