

# Growing panes

*Many more people are being tempted — by the likes of Jamie Oliver or Nigella Lawson — to start growing their own vegetables for the first time.*

*There is nothing better than sitting down to enjoy food you've actually grown yourself and despite the erratic weather this summer, it turned out to suit some crops and produced a bumper harvest. Peter Bennett offers some advice on getting a good harvest every year.*



**W**hether you're a keen beginner or an experienced gardener, this is the time when you might be wondering whether you got the best from your allotment or asking if you could grow more next year.

Others might be thinking if they could actually surprise the family by bringing in fresh vegetables from the garden rather than polywrapped produce from the supermarket?

Some of the easiest crops — which you can grow as a new gardener — are tomatoes, cucumbers and courgettes, as well as beans, peas beetroot etc. In fact, there are so many things you can easily

● *Size it up: knowing how large your greenhouse needs to be and where is a key question*

succeed with that you'll be spoilt for choice.

It is most rewarding to be able to extend the growing season and to start all these crops from seed, so you'll need space to propagate and pot on before planting out. If you've experimented with starting off seeds on a windowsill you may well have been disappointed by uneven growth, straggly seedlings and untidy sills!

Rather than subject plants to these often cramped conditions, think about

providing them with their own place — a greenhouse. Here you can create the correct environment for them to flourish, whilst protecting them from the inclement weather and predators. A greenhouse also enables you economically to grow your own bedding plants and produce new plants by simple cuttings.

It's important that you don't feel put off by the massive range of greenhouses to choose from. To help make your choice, consider the following points and you should be able to enjoy the greenhouse for years to come.