

This booklet has been produced by the Environmental Sustainability Working Group (ESWG) of the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations. The **Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations** promotes intercultural education, understanding and peace through voluntary service. **International Voluntary Service (IVS)** strives for a fairer world, one that is more sustainable, healthier and with more balanced resources and social justice, which will lead towards the **development of people, communities, their happiness and solidarity**. Alliance projects and events promote active citizenship, cultural and social exchange, cooperation and peace between different cultures and people; they also suggest alternative models of economic, environmental and civil development. The Alliance recognizes **sustainability as a key element for the well-being of local communities and the entire planet**. It regards social, economic and environmental issues as inseparable and interdependent components of human progress that must be taken up by society at large as a principle guiding the many choices each citizen makes every day.



The **Environmental Sustainability Working Group** was created in 2012 with the aim of promoting the principles of environmental sustainability among volunteers, local communities and the network's associations. Being aware of the delicate relationship between human beings and the surrounding environment, the ESGW invites everyone to reflect on their impact on local communities as well as their role in our global society; we are all part of the same wonderful earth and have the responsibility to protect the natural resources it offers.



The ESGW created this booklet in 2015, when it focused its activities on the topic of climate change. Joint under the headline of “**IVS against Climate Change**”, the Alliance and other IVS networks believe that civil society engagement is as important as international agreements to find solutions for current problems. By initiating local projects all around the world, supporting grassroots movements and engaging in a variety of initiatives, the movement intends to promote sustainability and climate justice, and take volunteers' voices and messages to decision-makers whose choices may affect our everyday life, global peace and democracy. The “Seed up and re-grow!” booklet was originally produced as thank-you to participants of the Alliance's Common Action “Cook4Climate Day” in 2015, but will hopefully serve as inspiration for many other volunteers, sustainability campaigners and home gardeners!

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<https://ivsagainstclimatechange.wordpress.com/>

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## Seed up and regrow!

Food consumption is presently one major critical factor influencing our planet, both its climate and the people living on it. Not only production methods and conditions tend to be harmful for nature as well as mankind, besides that, tons of food travel large distances every single day to reach the consumer, while large quantities of food are wasted and end up in the dust bin even though they are still edible.

This years' Common Action initiated by the Environmental Sustainability Working Group of the Alliance, aimed at raising awareness for the impacts of our consumption decisions and intended to trigger creative ideas of how to prepare a sustainable meal.

Was that easy and funny? If you enjoyed the Cook for Climate Action, you might take a step further now and think about how to grow (at least some of) the ingredients that you have used in your sustainable meal at home, in your garden, on the balcony or even in your flat. Planting seeds is one obvious way to start a mini home garden, but going beyond that, why not betting on alleged "kitchen waste"? It often contains precious nutrients that can be re-used for nurturing new plants, and some veggie leftovers might actually astonish you by regrowing and giving new fruits.

Intrigued? Continue reading, get new ideas and try them out!



## 1. No-waste: Regrowing kitchen “waste”

### GARLIC

Garlic can be re-grown from a single clove only – you may take one that already started forming a shoot, i.e. “kitchen waste” ;-). Plant it root down in potting soil. Garlic enjoys warm temperatures and direct sunlight, so possibly keep it outdoors in plain sunlight during day. Once you notice that a new shoot has established, cut it back so that the plant will put all energy into producing a bulb. After harvesting, don’t forget to spare one clove to restart the regrowth process!



### GREEN ONION/ SCALLION, CELERY, LEMON GRASS and LEEK

Similar procedure for all of them: E.g., put the white lower part of a green onion (about 2-3 cm) with the roots intact in a glass of water and leave it in a warm and sunny place, changing the water every few days. Soon, the plant will start to regrow. After about one week, pot it in soil, keep watering the plant and watch it grow. If you want to regrow celery, lemon grass or leek, proceed similarly.

### LETTUCE, BOK CHOY and CABBAGE

Similar to regrowing green onion and leek you proceed with other greens: Keep the white root end with part of the vegetable left and put it in a bowl of water so that the roots are covered. Leave it in a sunny place, change the water regularly and moisten the leaves occasionally. After some days, new roots and leaves will emerge. Transfer the plant into soil after one week approximately.



### GINGER

Take a spare knobby ginger rhizome and put it in potting soil with the buds (“knobs”) facing upwards – they will form new shoots. Ginger likes “tropical conditions”, so keep it moist, in diffuse light and warm temperatures. After a while, a reed-like plant will grow. For harvesting, pull up the whole plant and use the root, but don’t forget to keep a part of the rhizome to re-plant it again!



## ROOT PLANTS (beets, turnips, parsnips)

Note in advance: Here you won't get new vegetables, you will only regrow the top green. But did you know that this leafy green gives a nice house plant, and can even be used in the kitchen, e.g. grated raw on salad? Check out the internet for creative ways of using root plant greens! For regrowing, say, carrot greens, cut off the top of a carrot, leaving about one inch of the vegetable root, and put it cut side down in a glass, mug or bowl with water. Fix it with toothpicks stuck into either side of the carrot stump, so that the bottom touches the water. Keep it in a light but not sunny place, change the water regularly and observe roots and green sprouting again. If you want, you can pot the plant, once established, into soil. Cut and use greens as needed.

## BASIL and CILANTRO

Take stems about 4 inches long, cut off a basil plant with a sharp blade just below the leaf nodes (i.e., the part of the stem where new leaves emerge). Put them in a glass of water so that the leaves are well above the water line, and leave them in a sunny but not too hot place. Change the water every couple of days until soon roots start to sprout. When the roots are about 2 inches long, pot the stems leaving enough space for each plant. Keep taking care of the plants and make sure they get enough sunlight.



## ONION

Cut off the root of the onion, leaving about half an inch of onion on top (use the upper half for cooking etc., of course!). Cover it with soil in a sunny place in your garden and keep it moist. Onions enjoy warm conditions, so better put them in a movable pot in case you live in colder climate and take them inside once it gets frosty.

And there are many more veggies to regrow! If you are really into it now, just search on the internet for more ideas and tips how to best nurture you plants.

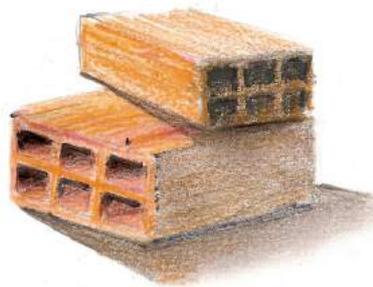
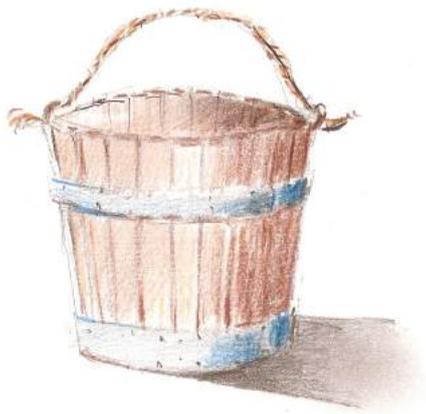
## 2. From “waste” to soil: Composting

Are there still veggie kitchen leftovers after you started regrowing them? So go for challenge no. 2 and try out composting!

The compost bin:

You might purchase a small compost tumbler (preferably at your local DIY or garden store), that’s a clean and easy option requiring rather little time and effort, but it is comparatively costly. Instead, you could build your own composting unit. For that you need:

- A garbage can or bucket
- A basin and a few bricks
- A drill



Drill holes in the bottom and sides of the can/ bucket to create aeration and drainage. Put it on top of some stones/bricks placed in a basin (to catch excess drainage). Add a layer of sawdust, straw or gravel at the bottom of the can/ bucket (for added drainage). Now you can start putting food scraps.

## What to put, and how much?



**“Greens”** (source of Nitrogen, usually wet and slimy): fruit and veggie leftovers (best if organic, i.e. not treated with chemicals!), green garden clippings and grass, access cooked rice, coffee grinds . . .



**“Browns”** (source of Carbon, usually bulky and dry): finely shredded newspaper (avoid glossy paper as it is often used in magazines!), cardboard, dry leaves, tea leaves, sugar cane waste . . .



Other helpful sources of minerals and activators: crushed egg shells, molasses, used coffee grounds, yoghurt mixed with water.

After each layer of food/ **Greens**, add some shredded paper/ **Browns** and water. As a rule of thumb, the balance should be about 1 **Greens** : 3 **Browns**, but generally make sure your pile is neither too soggy (add some **Browns**, nor too dry (add water). Break down the material you put in the compost, big pieces would slow down the composting process. Turn the pile every once in a while. It will depend on the climate of where you live how long it takes until the compost is ready.

These are some basic ideas about composting that can easily be realized on a balcony. If you are keen on starting your own pile, check out the internet for more information and tips, e.g.:

<http://www.balconycontainergardening.com/gardening/466-composting-methods>  
<http://cultivatecentral.com/2014/04/18/diy-composting-on-your-balcony/>  
<http://www.goveganic.net/article201.html?lang=en>

### 3. Flower-power: Making your own seed bombs

Preparing seed bombs is really easy, and using them on waste grey land will entail colourful joy!

What you need:

- Seeds (1 part)
- Clay (you may procure it comes from your area, 5 parts)
- Compost or potting soil
- Water



Mix clay, soil and seeds and slowly add water until you get a pliable “dough”. Form small balls, not too big in size (walnut size), put them on newspaper and let them dry for 1 to 2 days. Ready for use! Once “planted”, you may watch the bomb blossoming in the beginning and help out with watering to ensure the seeds are growing properly. If you want to store the bombs, keep them in a cool, dark and dry place, but not for too long as the seeds might start sprouting.