

Little at Large

DEMANDS on gardens have changed enormously in recent years and I'm often asked whether it is worth growing vegetables in very small gardens.

Few of us have the sort of text-book plot needed and, although allotments have become more popular, finding the time to tend them is always a problem.

My answer is yes, without hesitation.

The renewed interest in growing vegetables has made seed companies expanding beyond the traditional vegetable selection.

You can now find on offer a good range of mini-vegetables, selected for their early maturity and compactness. These crops, which range from carrots and courgettes, to parsnips and turnips, can all be harvested while young, tender and sweet.

They can be grown in small spaces and are perfect to grow in pots.

The good thing about con-



Garden talk, by Simply Garden's Martin Little

tainers is that you can move them around to catch the best of the sun and light. When you are fighting for space, the one thing you want from your vegetables plot is maximum returns.

Quick-growing, high-yielding vegetables, like cut-and-come-again lettuce, spinach and french beans will give the best results.

However, quantity is not always the main incentive for growing vegetables, especially in small gardens. People often do it just to give themselves a treat.

In these cases you should select your vegetables carefully. Apart from personal taste, you should go for varieties which flavour and quality is far greater when they are home-grown, like tomatoes and sweetcorn, or for those which are only rarely on sale or expensive to buy, such as pink fir apple potatoes and rocket salad.

Also consider going for vegetables which lose flavour in the journey from field to consumer, like salads, mange-tout peas and carrots.

I can guarantee there isn't better satisfaction in gardening than picking and eating your own home-grown vegetables.

Happy gardening
Martin Little