



## ENVIRONMENT ISSUES: Local Sourcing

### Buying locally

Buying products that have been made or produced locally is good for your local economy, gives you fresh food and is better for the environment. It's also an excellent way to live sustainably. 'Buying food locally' means sourcing food from places that are physically close to you - perhaps there is even a farmers' market down the street.

A farmers' market is a place for local farmers to sell fruits and vegetables they have grown. Buying there means you are usually supporting local businesses and employment, and helping to build a sense of community. Other benefits of buying locally grown produce include:

- **Fewer food miles:** Sometimes fruits and vegetables in stores can travel up to 5,000 miles to reach your kitchen table; this is called 'food miles'. The further they travel the more carbon emissions and pollution they create, so buying locally produced food helps reduce this.
- **Freshness:** Your food will usually taste fresher, it could have been picked the same day rather than weeks ago!
- **Fruits in season:** Buying locally inevitably means buying fruits and vegetables that can be grown in your area, and thus those that are in season. Below is a list of fruits and vegetables and when they are in season in the UK:
  - **Spring:** Beetroot, broccoli, carrots, cucumber, lettuce and salad leaves, new potatoes, rhubarb, spinach, spring onions
  - **Summer:** Asparagus, aubergine, courgettes, peas, tomatoes, sweet corn, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, cherries
  - **Autumn:** Carrots, butternut squash, parsnip, peas, peppers, potatoes, sweetcorn, apples, peaches, pears, plums
  - **Winter:** Brussels sprouts, carrots, celery, leek, swedes, turnip, parsnip, potatoes, cranberries, apples



Cont'd

 **ENVIRONMENT ISSUES: Local Sourcing** cont'd**Growing your own**

An alternative to buying locally is to grow fruits and vegetables yourself. This can help the environment, save you money and keep you healthy through exercise. It can also provide you with a constant supply of fresh fruit and vegetables right at your doorstep! Growing your own food can also ensure that your food is free of pesticides and other chemicals. Such food is known as 'organic' produce.

**Windowsills and gardens:** If you only have a windowsill you can grow herbs or lettuce in a pot; and if you have a garden you could plant a variety of fruits and vegetables. You can plan so that you have a rotation of different fruits and vegetables throughout the year and use your own compost from your food waste to supplement garden soil.

**Allotments:** An allotment is a piece of land (usually around 250 square metres) that you rent in order to grow fruits and vegetables. You pay an annual rent to cover the cost of general maintenance of the area, to have access to amenities such as a water supply. Your local council can inform you of allotments near you, and how to get on the waiting list (if the allotments are in demand).

**Community garden schemes:** These are neighbourhood projects where groups of people join together to reclaim a piece of land to grow produce for their community.

**School gardens:** Some schools, particularly sustainable schools, have a garden where students are able to grow their own fruits and vegetables and learn about sustainable agriculture.

**Did you know?**

Over 300,000 people are involved in more than 450 community gardening programmes around the country.