

# IN-GROWN

Tired of those wilted kadi patta leaves and less than flavourful mint? **Rhea Dhanbhora** and **Dev Goswami** tell you how to give your green thumb an encouraging push...

From mint leaves that are crisper than you've ever seen to flavourful basil and juicy cherry tomatoes — growing food in your own home means that you never have to depend on bad quality produce again. Take a look at what women in the city have to say...

## CHOOSING YOUR PLANTS

The first step to growing food well is choosing the right plants. Horticulturist Shaan Lalwani says, "Choose plants that recover easily if you forget to water them and are not bothered by root rot or insects. Orchids, peperomia, aloe and various colourful grafted cacti fit into this category."

## HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN START OFF WITH...



MINT



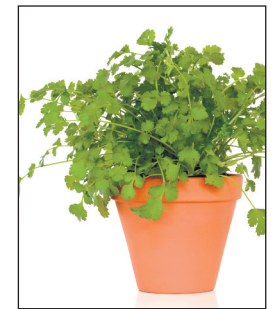
KADI PATT



CHILLIES



ALOE



CORIANDER

## WATER, WATER

Shaan also answers the question we are sure will be going through your minds — how much water? It depends on each plant — some require more water while some require less. Shaan says, "Large plants grown in small pots in bright light need twice as much water as small plants growing in roomy containers in dim light." He gives us a simple way to ascertain if a plant needs watering: Tip the pot slightly to see if it feels heavy or light. "With practice, you can easily tell if a container is unusually moist or dry by checking its weight," he adds.



## BETTER QUALITY

45-year-old Ulka Goswami has been growing plants in her kitchen for nearly 20 years. She tells us, "I grow plants such as kadi patta, aloe vera, chillies, orange, pomegranate, mint leaves, fenugreek and coriander. I make sure that there is a proper outlet to drain excess water. I also make sure that I furrow the soil once in a while so that there is space for air to circulate throughout the plant. Other maintenance steps include removing dead or bad leaves which have lost their colour and trimming the plant occasionally to ensure that it does not kill other plants around it. I can honestly say that the quality of leaves is far better than those available in the market."

## TAKE A LOOK AT OUR TOP FIVE POTTY PICKS...



### THREE IN ONE

**Price:** ₹5,550  
**Where:** Home Collective, Chowpatty



### CLAY INSPIRED

**Price:** ₹140 onwards  
**Where:** @home, Andheri (W)



## A LITTLE LOVE

79-year-old Charni Road resident Roshnak Gorakhpurwalla, tells us, "I've always wanted a garden of my own. I indulge my green thumb by growing plants such as mint and kadi patta and since I've started I definitely can't go back to the store bought variety. I have also tried growing red and yellow capsicum and though they're a bit tough to maintain, they came out quite successfully. Plants require a lot of taking care of — you have to water them regularly and loosen the soil once a month to keep it soft and avoid it getting too cakey. It's not hard to grow things in your own home; all you need is a little space, a little sunlight and some free time."



### SOFT BAG

**Price:** ₹2,460 onwards  
**Where:** Home Collective, Chowpatty

## GOOD SOIL IS THE KEY

"I've been growing plants for about 10-12 years. I grow kadi patta, chillies, coriander, methi, karela creepers, bottle gourd and spinach. Regular watering and good soil is the key to growing healthy herbs. These herbs can grow in pots easily as well, so space is not exactly an issue. I usually spend 20 to 30 minutes with the plants. You need to move the soil about to keep it fresh. Ensure it is trimmed from time to time. Make sure it gets adequate sunlight and water. Also dried, used tea powder (without sugar) can be used to fertilise the soil. You can be assured of the quality, as the water and soil that is used is fresh," says 82-year-old Chembur resident, Shanti Gandhi.



## POTTERING ABOUT

You don't have to fill your home with the normal, clay and earthen brown pots but if you're opting for fun, funky varieties, there are a few things to keep in mind. Shaan says, "You should always keep in mind the root structure of the plant you are growing. Carrots need long pots. Similarly, for plants such as cabbage you will require a shallow pot with a much wider circumference."



### RUSTIC

**Price:** ₹140 onwards  
**Where:** @home, Andheri (W)



### THREE IN ONE

**Price:** ₹50 onwards  
**Where:** Vriksha Nursery, Vile Parle