Growing basil from cuttings

Root a healthy basil stem to make another small herb plant.

What you need

• A healthy non-flowering basil stem about 8 to 10cm long

• Clean scissors, a clean jar and water

• A small pot with drainage and peat-free compost

Step by step

1. Cut a healthy stem just below a leaf joint. Remove the lower leaves, leaving a few at the top.

2. Stand the stem in water so no leaves sit below the waterline.

3. Keep it warm and bright, out of harsh sun. Change the water every day or two and clean the jar.

4. When roots reach about 3 to 5cm, plant carefully in moist compost. Keep the stem upright without crushing the roots.

5. Keep indoors until nights are reliably warm. Pinch out growing tips once established to encourage bushy growth, and harvest lightly.

Make this project work for you

How long it takes

Roots usually develop in 1 to 2 weeks in warm conditions. Allow another 2 to 4 weeks after potting for a plant strong enough for light picking.

What you can realistically expect

Healthy cuttings can become productive small plants, but some fail to root. Basil needs warmth, light and regular care, and is not frost hardy.

Safety and hygiene

Use clean scissors and discard stems that turn black or slimy. Keep water and sharp tools safely positioned. Wash leaves before eating.

A different way to do it

Use a lightweight pot and a windowsill you can reach comfortably. Someone can take the cutting while you look after watering and picking.

Gardening is for everyone

You don’t need a big garden, expensive equipment or years of experience. Whether you can spend hours gardening or just a few minutes a week, there’s something you can grow. Whether you do everything yourself or have someone help you, you’re a gardener. You’re welcome here.

General UK guidance. Results vary with light, temperature, variety and care. Start small and ask for help whenever it suits you.

Questions? Growsmartuk@gmail.com