

SATURDAY ACTIVITIES

GROWING PIPS

You don't have to buy seeds to grow. You could take pips from fruit that you eat, such as avocados, dates and citrus fruits, and grow them into plants. It can take years, and a conservatory or hot climate, for these plants to grow any fruit of their own, but in the meantime they make great houseplants.

Plant: Anytime
Site: Bright & warm, inside

You will need:

- ★ fresh pip or pips from ripe, preferably organic fruit (organic pips are more likely to grow, but you could try non-organic too)
- ★ a plant pot around 9cm (3½in) wide, filled with multi-purpose compost, and a drip tray
- ★ a resealable plastic bag that the pot and drip tray will fit inside

1 Water the compost well. Prepare and plant the pip or pips (see opposite). Seal the pot and tray in the plastic bag.



2 Check the compost every few days and water if it's dry. In a few weeks, roots, shoots and leaves will grow. Remove the bag.



3 If several seedlings grow, cut away the smaller, weaker ones to leave one strong one.



4 Keep watering regularly as the plant grows. When roots show at the bottom, 'pot on' the plant (see page 56). Do this whenever roots show.

Avocado

Preparing
Wash the avocado pip really well. Put in a container and cover with water. Leave for 2 days.

Planting
With the pointed end up, push the pip into the compost.

Citrus fruit

Preparing
Remove 5 pips from a lemon, orange, clementine or grapefruit. Put in a sieve. Rub under running water to remove all fruit.

Planting
Use a pencil to make 5 holes in the compost. Push a seed into each so it is 1cm (¼in) deep. Cover with a little compost.

Date

Preparing
Use pips from fresh, not dried, dates — fresh dates are juicier and may be labelled 'Medjool'. Wash the pips, put in a container and cover with water. Leave for 2 days.

Planting
Push 2 pips into the compost so they are spaced out well and are 2½cm (1in) down. Cover with a little compost.

Leave the top half of the pip uncovered.