

FIVE STEP GUIDE TO GIY



change **X**

STARTING A GIY GROUP

EVERYTHING YOU NEED

TIME



As a champion you'll need up to 4 hours per week to start and maintain your group.

PEOPLE



Ideally you are a team of around 3 people, so that you can share ideas and divide up the work.

FUNDING



You won't need any funding to kick this idea off. Just enthusiasm for growing your own.

Who typically starts a GIY group?

Someone who is:

- Interested in food growing
- Passionate about the GIY ethos
- Enjoys bringing people in the community together

5 Step Summary

- 1 Complete your 30 Day Jumpstart Challenge
- 2 Get help
- 3 Find a suitable venue
- 4 Prepare for the launch
- 5 Launch your GIY group

Support and Additional Resources

www.giy.ie

www.giy.ie/get-involved/grow-in-the-community

www.changex.org/giy

WELCOME

“I believe in food empathy. Only by growing my own vegetables, I really started to understand where food comes from. With GIY we’d like to encourage people everywhere to give food growing a try. We’re building a global movement of food growers and we’re excited to have you on board!”

Michael Kelly,
Founder of GIY



Introduction to the Idea

Why GIY?

GIY’s vision is for a healthy, happy and more sustainable world, where land, food and people are fully nourished. The way the food chain currently operates has profound implications for our health, community, environment and local economies. Valuable nutrients are wasted transporting food around the globe and there is an ever-widening gulf between food production and consumption. GIY believes that change begins with the decision to sow a seed and if we can encourage enough people to grow some of their own food then we can build a whole army of people that have ‘food empathy’ and fundamentally change the way our global food chain operates.

Who is GIY for?

GIYing is for everyone! It’s not just for experienced growers or people already involved in growing - anyone can start!

What do GIY Groups do?

GIY Groups are run by a ‘local champion’ and groups have anything from a handful to hundreds of people meeting in various places - workplaces, schools, or community venues. Most GIY meetings are free of charge and open to all but every group is different. The magic lies in a group of people coming together, learning, sharing and having fun.

There are no rules when it comes to what GIY groups do - it’s up to you! Some groups do garden visits, swap seeds or work with local schools and organizations to establish community gardens. It’s really up to the members of each group but at the most basic level, a GIY group is an excuse to come together with like-minded people for a chat about growing.

YOU ARE A GIY CHAMPION NOW

“Welcome again to the ChangeX GIY guide! We’re delighted you’re thinking about starting a GIY group in your community and becoming a GIY Champion.

GIY Champions are people that care about their community and believe in the tremendous potential of food growing.

Although most GIY groups are run by a small steering group, it’s the champion that is the changemaker with the initial enthusiasm to get the group going.

Typically champions are not expert growers, just people very interested in growing their own and passionate about the idea of coming together with other GIYers to learn and share knowledge. GIY understands how important its Champions are so tries to support them in as many ways as possible!

In this guide you’ll find all the information, practical tips and resources you need. There is someone to help you at each stage of the journey so don’t be afraid to get in touch!



YOUR 30 DAY CHECKLIST

Understand the challenge

Watch the short welcome video on your ChangeX page.

Learn more about the idea you're starting

This '5 Step Guide' includes all you need to know about the specifics of starting your project.

Find 3-5 interested people

You already have your own project page on changex.org. Use it to share the project with others and recruit your first supporters.

Set up a casual kick-off meeting

Host a meeting at your home, a coffee shop or in your workplace and come up with an action plan along with your team. You can use your ChangeX page to set up an event and invite people.

Let us know that you are up and running

At your event, take a team picture and agree the first step you will take as a group to get started.

STEP 2: GET HELP

The most successful GIY groups are a collaborative effort, where a group of people come together to start and maintain it. Some great GIY groups are a solo act, but they don't always last, because let's be honest – community organizing can be hard work! And it also needs diverse perspectives.

So it's far more fun if you've got support and can share the workload. GIY is not wild about committees, titles, chains of office and all round stuffiness – but it does make sense to have a steering group and to get people involved that can provide practical help, for e.g. one person does your group's web stuff, another works on promotion, another tries to organize speakers, another organises garden visits, etc.

It's also tremendously valuable if you can get an experienced grower to get involved in your group – they can act as a mentor to novice growers in your group and even give a talk on nights you can't get a speaker.

The steering group can help to organize your launch event and get local interested people along. On the night of the launch you can also ask some people to join the steering group and they generally will be happy to help out.

Following the launch, it'll help for the steering group to meet regularly to plan the activities of the group. Expanding the group regularly will keep the pressure off everyone and when recruiting keep in mind the roles that need to be filled - check out the 'roles box' over on the right hand side.

ROLES



The Marketing Guru

Does advertising and PR.
Gets great photography from meetups and other activities

The Money Person

Counts the money and takes responsibility for fundraising

The Techie

Updates your group page, social media, email etc

STEP 3: FIND A SUITABLE VENUE

A key action in getting your GIY group up and running is to get a venue for GIY meetings. Typically, GIY meetings take place once a month in a community venue and last for 1-2 hours. A key principle of the GIY network is that the meetings should be free of charge if possible so it's preferable that you get the venue free of charge.

That's not always possible but many venues are happy to provide a venue for such a good cause. If you have to pay for the venue, you might need to get donations from people coming to the meeting.

GIY Groups base themselves in libraries, town halls, community centers, hotel meeting rooms, coffee shops, restaurants, schools and many other venues. Where you base your group is not particularly important, as long as the venue is comfortable and provides a nice environment for meetings.

You don't necessarily need facilities, although it's handy if the venue provides a projector and screen. If teas and coffees are available to buy that makes for a more sociable meeting!



Claire hosts her GIY group meetings in the backroom of the local library.

Venue Checklist

- Accessibility**
Can people who are mobility impaired get into the venue, to the room and also access toilets?
- Parking**
Is there adequate parking nearby?
- Technology**
Can the venue even provide a microphone, screen and projector. These might be useful.
- Natural light**
Not a must but you will be thankful for it, once you start taking a sharing the first photos for your group to encourage more people to come along.
- Seating**
Check whether you'll have to arrange seating in advance of each meeting
- Commitment**
Is the owner of the venue excited about your cause and will they be happy to support you in different ways. For example by helping you spread the word through their social channels.

Check out additional tips on finding a suitable venue and more here:

www.changex.org/blog/category/how-to

STEP 4: PREPARE FOR THE LAUNCH

Pick a date

Picking a date for your GIY group launch is an important step as it focuses the minds of all involved in the run up to the launch meeting. It's also the point at which GIY groups start to feel 'real' for the organizers, with a real-world date to work towards.

There are a couple of simple pointers in terms of when to kick off.

- Leave enough time to prepare for the event and to promote it as widely as possible.
- Think about the seasonality – spring and fall tend to work well to launch a group, whereas the middle of summer does not.
- Be consistent - Pick a day of the week that is likely to work in your community e.g. the last Wednesday of the month.

Promote

Once you have a venue and have picked a date you need to promote it. Treat the launch as a powerful opportunity to reach out widely in your community. Start talking to EVERYONE on every media avenue available to you.

- GIY can provide you with posters that you can edit and put up in your local church, town hall, tax office, shop, garden center, coffee shop, sports grounds - anywhere there are potential GIYers. **Check out the resource section on your ChangeX page.**
- Use social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook to communicate and spread the word locally.
- Use the GIY website to spread the word, you can post your launch event on your GIY page on changex.org.
- Connect with other voluntary and community groups in your community - don't be afraid to go and meet these groups, tell them what you're planning and why you're excited about it.
- Get on the local radio, and send emails to local papers for local notice section. They should be interested and will be particularly effective in getting the word out. You'll need to send a press release typically 2 - 3 weeks before the launch and GIY HQ

IDEAS FOR YOUR LAUNCH



Invite a speaker - A locally known person will get more people's attention for your kick-off.

Do a seed or plant swap - Ask people to bring plants they have to give away **Intro kick off**

GIY film - Show a short video about the GIY movement

POD session - Get people into groups to talk about what they'd like to learn

Free drinks are always a good idea to get people coming along.



STEP 5: LAUNCH YOUR GIY GROUP

At the launch

A launch event is a powerful way to get a group started, creating a bit of a buzz around the idea of GIY in your community. After you register your group, GIY can provide you with lots of information on organizing a launch event, including presentation templates and handouts, and you can even download videos to show at the event.

Your GIY Group Launch - One agenda idea

1. Welcome
Explain important things about the venue (where are the toilets), ask for permission to take and share photos of people if you have a photographer, etc.
2. Circulate attendance sheet for contact details, including mobile phone number and email addresses.
3. Show the GIY video
4. Explain the purpose of GIY and tell your own story of why you got excited about the idea. Give others a chance to share their stories.
5. 20 minute POD session
6. Collect ideas from groups
7. Tell everyone about the next meeting and how to engage with the group in the meantime.
Aks people about their preferred ways to stay in touch.
8. Say thank you and invite everyone to stay a bit longer for a drink and a chat.



After the event

Following up with people after the event is just as important as the event itself. You've created some excitement, don't wait too long and use the momentum to pull people into more conversations online and grow their commitment to the new group.

FOLLOW UP CHECKLIST

- Invite people to your GIY page on ChangeX**
Using the "Invite Friends" functionality you can invite people to your page on ChangeX.
- Create an email list or What's App group**
Depending on what you agreed on how people want to stay in touch, you might want to add additional tools.
- Post an update to your page**
After you've invited people post an update telling a bit about what happened at the launch event. Add a couple of photos. If any questions stayed open, ask them now.
- Encourage people to share ideas.**
Some people might be more inclined to share their thoughts and ideas online than speaking up at an event. So give people a chance again, to add their thoughts now.

To get conversations started, it helps to ask clear questions like

- "What would you like to do at the next group meetup?"
- "What's the first growing project we could get started together?"

10 THINGS YOU CAN DO IN GIY GROUPS

“I am a passionate believer in sustainability and believe being able to feed ourselves independently is a necessary skill for all to achieve.”

“We want to start a group around horticulture, planting, growing and harvesting. It will be inclusive of everyone, older persons, those with disabilities, young people, those in recovery and anyone with an interest.”

GIY groups start with a few people meeting up to nerd out about the most tasty type of potatoes you can grow, or which natural fertilizers are most effective.

But over time, there are many more ways people connect around the idea of spreading more love for the home-grown and contributing to the whole community. That's the magic of GIY. Here are a few things, GIY groups do:

1. Start allotments and community gardens
2. Swap plants or seeds
3. Teach kids to grow in school gardens
4. Start Open Orchards
5. Host street feasts with home-grown food
6. Set up urban gardens
7. Do guerilla Gardening
8. Set up Cottage Markets and sell home grown
9. Grow peas and more on the desk with GIY @Work
10. Live healthier together.

“We're trying to make our village the best place to live. We want to use the green space we have to run projects to benefit the whole community.”

www.changex.org

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