

# Chorlton Plant Swap: Growing your garden by swapping

Everyone is welcome to offer and receive plants and seeds all year round on our Facebook group. Although we're Chorlton Plant Swap, we also encompass Old Trafford and Whalley Range. It's all completely free.

Join in at [www.facebook.com/groups/Chorltonplantswap](https://www.facebook.com/groups/Chorltonplantswap)

We are also on Twitter at [@PlantSwapM21](https://twitter.com/PlantSwapM21) but most action is on Facebook.

You can ask other members if they have specific plants or seeds that you are looking for, or request types of plants, say houseplants, edibles, plants for shady spots etc. Unless you have already offered plants on other occasions, please make an offer when you ask for something. Please don't simply join and ask for your garden to be filled with plants free of charge as the idea is to share. There are lots of ways to make new plants to share, as you can see in this leaflet.

Please make sure the plants you offer are in good shape, not dying or diseased. All cuttings should be well-rooted, and seeds within their sow-by date. Although one person's weed may be another's treasured plant, we discourage offering seedlings of trees that unsuitable for domestic gardens, such as ash or sycamore.

Chorlton Plant Swap has been going since 2008: so many people have enjoyed flourishing gardens through swaps of different plants. Thanks for joining in 😊

## Useful links:

### Garden Centres

Hulme Community Garden Centre: [www.hulmegardencentre.org.uk](http://www.hulmegardencentre.org.uk)

Bud Garden Centre in Burnage: [www.budgarden.co.uk](http://www.budgarden.co.uk)

Chorlton Plant Nursery: [www.chorltonnursery.com](http://www.chorltonnursery.com)

### Other interesting Facebook groups for gardeners

No Dig Gardening: [www.facebook.com/groups/Undug](https://www.facebook.com/groups/Undug)

Manchester Organic Gardeners: [www.facebook.com/ManchesterOrganicGardeners](https://www.facebook.com/ManchesterOrganicGardeners)

### Other useful websites

Royal Horticulture Society: [www.rhs.org.uk/advice](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice)

Garden Organic: [www.gardenorganic.org.uk/growing-advice](http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/growing-advice)

Herb Society: [www.herbsociety.org.uk](http://www.herbsociety.org.uk)

### Workshops

We are considering running some workshops, including Herbal Treats for Mind & Body, and Foraging. If you would like to find out more, please email [chorltonplantswap@googlemail.com](mailto:chorltonplantswap@googlemail.com)



## Swapping plants and seeds in Chorlton since 2008

- \* Swap your surplus plants for something new: indoor or outdoor plants, edibles or ornamentals, and seeds
- \* Save money you would have spent on plants or travelling to garden centres
- \* Reduce waste by not throwing away surplus plants that have spread
- \* Re-use plant pots to share your plants
- \* Discover new plants that you've not grown before
- \* Receive and give advice on planting and growing in our friendly Facebook group

## How and where do we swap?

**Online** all year round, through our Facebook group at [www.facebook.com/groups/Chorltonplantswap](https://www.facebook.com/groups/Chorltonplantswap)

**At events** that you can attend in person in and around Chorlton.

There is no set venue: we join events like local festivals, so there's additional attractions and a good footfall. We try to hold swaps 3-4 times a year across the seasons to take advantage of what's happening in our gardens.

## Who are we?

Chorlton Plant Swap is an informal, friendly, voluntary group. It was set up in 2008 by Danielle Lowy. Liz Cole, an RHS gardening tutor, has been involved since the early days, bringing valuable horticulture knowledge to the group. We enjoy the involvement of many volunteers who help at swaps. No plant knowledge is required so long as you can help in a friendly and welcoming way.

Everyone's welcome to join in 😊

# Plant Propagation: the magic of making new plants!

There's so many ways you can create new plants from old. Here's an introduction to get you started. Do use the links overleaf to find out more, and of course Google is at your service too ☺

## Splitting plants

Many perennial plants (ones that live from year to year, as opposed to annuals that live for one season) can easily be divided to create new ones. This works well for geraniums, sedum, grasses, herbs like chives and mints as well as bulbs and tubers. In spring or autumn, split off a section of plant with its roots, and simply replant it in the ground or in a pot. Or dig up the whole thing and split it. This will re-invigorate large, older plants so it's good practice and you get new plants.

## Taking cuttings

Some cuttings are incredibly easy: spider plant babies can be snipped off and dropped in a glass of water to grow roots before being potted up in compost. Plants like lemon balm and mint are equally easy to grow from a simple cutting from a stem—even from a cut bunch bought in the supermarket.

You can take *softwood cutting* from plants like lavender, sage, pelargoniums, fuchsias and many more. Take about 10cm stem cutting from the parent plant just above a leaf joint, remove the bottom leaves, and insert in a small pot of compost with a plastic bag to keep humid. Check the soil doesn't dry out, but don't overwater. They will take about 3-4 weeks to take root.

*Hardwood cuttings* can be taken from trees and shrubs, for instance, gooseberries and other fruit bushes, buddleia, forsythia or willow. Take cuttings in autumn/winter when the parent plant is dormant. Cut a section about 20cm long above a bud from a healthy shoot newly grown in the summer. Insert into soil, either in a trench outdoors or in a pot, with about two-thirds of the cutting within the soil. Leave until next autumn, keeping it watered and weeded if necessary.

## Sowing Seeds

Seeds can be started off indoors in modules or pots, or sown outdoors direct in the soil.

Check what your seed packet advises or, with seed received in a swap, Google it.

You'll need a light, well draining compost to sow your seeds so most home-made compost is not suitable as it's too heavy (and may contain weed seeds). You can cover pots/trays with plastic to keep the soil moist until the seeds germinate, then remove any covers.

Start seeds off in small pots, then pot them on as they grow bigger, or plant them outside.

Bear in mind that in the north of England, plants may need more protection before being planted out—as well as slug protection ;-). Did you know you can get free pots and trays at Hulme Community Garden Centre? You can buy some seeds whilst you're there too.

Store your seeds somewhere cool and dry.

## Saving Seeds

Seed-saving is what everyone did before seed companies decided we needed to buy new seed every year! It's such a satisfying aspect of gardening to collect seeds from your flowers or vegetables to grow again next year—and even better to share with others!

During the summer and into autumn, after a plant has flowered, seed heads will develop and ripen. If you leave them on the plant, they may fall into the soil and grow new plants. These can be dug up to share. You can also pick the seed head off the plant to regrow where and when you want—or share them with other gardeners, of course.

Aquilegia, poppies and snapdragon will happily release their seed when turned upside down into a paper bag. With plants like calendula, sunflowers or cosmos, you can pluck the seeds off the plant. Sweet pea seeds can be collected from the dried plant pod. Leave them somewhere dry indoors to dry out before storing them.

Seeds can be extracted from edible plants too.

To save tomato seeds, cut one open, removing pulp and seeds, wash in a strainer, and leave to dry on kitchen paper.

Beans and peas: leave a few pods to dry out on the plant, then remove from pods and leave out to dry further. Pepper and chilli seeds are some of the easiest to extract. Just slit them open and pull out the seeds to dry.

To collect seed from rocket, lettuce and radishes, let the plant flower and go to seed—also known as bolting. Let the seeds pods ripen on the plant, or cut and hang them inside to dry. You can then prise them open or even shake the seeds out of the pods into a bag. Compost all the non-seed bits that you don't need.

**Storing your seeds.** It's important to keep seeds dry, so they'll be better off in envelopes in an airtight container indoors rather than in your shed or garage. Don't forget to write the seed names on the envelope, and the year they were collected.

Word of warning: if you are saving seed from supermarket bought vegetables, or seed grown from bought seed packets marked *F1 hybrid*, they may not grow exactly the same as the parent plant because of the way the seed has been commercially bred.

Try a supplier like *Real Seeds* for good quality plants whose seeds are open pollinated and can be saved from the plant you've grown. There's more detailed information on seed saving on their website [www.realseeds.co.uk](http://www.realseeds.co.uk).

Or join Garden Organic's *Heritage Seed Library* to support their work in plant protection, and receive interesting heirloom seeds not available commercially. [www.gardenorganic.org.uk/hsl](http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/hsl)



Find out how to make free plants with our mini propagation guide inside



Free seeds to get you started ☺