



## 04 Growing in containers



If you don't have much space, you can grow small dwarf fruit trees in pots (use a tree on a very dwarfing rootstock).



As long as they have the right soil, nutrients, light and room for their roots to grow, fruit trees will grow happily in containers in warm, sheltered school ground spaces

- Choose a 30-40cm (12-16") container of wood or terracotta and place some drainage crocks in the base, before filling with planting mix (use a heavy multi-purpose compost, mixed with a little topsoil and garden compost).
- Plant the tree to the depth of the old soil mark. It is a good idea to use a stake to support the tree – a bamboo cane (with cane cap on the end) or something slightly thicker will do.
- Water the pot regularly (daily in hot weather) and feed every two weeks during the growing season with a high potash feed (tomato food is good). Do not allow the pot to become waterlogged – place the pot on bricks to help drainage if necessary.
- If the tree produces a lot of fruit, you will need to remove some of it to prevent the branches breaking (it is best to thin out the fruitlets (immature or 'baby' fruits) in June, before they get too big – pinch out surplus fruits to leave one or two fruits per cluster).
- For apple and pear trees, prune in winter, as outlined for a 'bush' tree (see pruning instructions below).
- Protect terracotta containers from frosty weather during the winter – either by moving to a shed or greenhouse or by wrapping in sacking or bubblewrap, otherwise they will shatter.