

KNOWING TO GROW: INCREASING THE RESILIENCE OF PLANT CENTRED FOOD PRODUCTION SKILLS

Knowledge and skills are essential for resilient agri-food systems.

What skills challenges do growers face?



Research into UK horticulture found:

- Production of fruit and vegetables at any scale requires complex knowledge and skills.
- Horticultural workers are highly skilled – this includes seasonal labourers.
- Essential learning happens ‘on the job’ and through peer knowledge exchange.
- Fresh produce and seasonality present specific skills and workforce challenges.
- ‘Back breaking’ work is unavoidable but harms individuals and deters recruits.
- Technological solutions are not ready to replace a majority of workers.
- Expansion is limited by uncertainty around labour supply, and barriers to new entrants.
- Growers need to be able to afford to reward workers well and offer jobs people want to do.

Conclusions



Ensuring availability of skills required to keep growing food in the UK depends on a vibrant horticultural industry generating healthy incomes for diverse producers.



Horticultural knowledge and skills are essential to society and should be valued as such.



Resilience will be improved by treating knowledge as a commons through sharing responsibility, benefits and ownership.

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