

Creating great online video content

Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, people have been moving online to connect and communicate with each other. This has been a learning curve for many of us, finding new platforms and new facilitation techniques. Others were already familiar with and making the most of online technology, and found it easier to adapt their ways of working. Online communication has had many challenges, and also unexpected benefits, for example, making more events accessible to those housebound for mobility or care reasons.

Two methods community gardeners have been using in these past months to connect are short instructional videos, and longer live streaming programmes. Using a mobile phone can get great results, but it takes a bit of practice to get the right shots, and then be able to edit it together to make a good film. Here are some hints and tips from people who have been working on making great long and short video content for social media, how they have found them useful, and what their top tips are for getting the most from them.

Recording a video for social media

Top tips from Conor O’Kane, SF&G and Community Gardens Ireland



When lockdown happened we knew we just had to connect with people, give them something positive to do and feel a bit normal. I started making short instructional videos for Facebook. I tried to imagine I was talking to a good friend of mine who had said she wanted to start growing but wasn't wild sure about how to go about it, and if she had enough space. She also was spending a lot of time watching long gardening

videos of people with beautiful big gardens and getting a bit disheartened. I decided to keep the videos to one topic and a maximum of five minutes. I got a good response to the first one so I just kept going. I was shocked so many people ended up watching the videos, but was really buoyed up by the positive comments and the enjoyment people took from them. Even more by people telling me they had done the things I was showing and it was working for them. That's the main reward, not clicks on a screen. There are some issues and limitations to making a film on your phone. All phones are different – different operating systems, format, inputs, not everything works on all phones. Phones can crash and stall when processing large amounts of information, and the memory can quickly run out. You can have less control of things like exposure, focus and audio inputs. And you will have to transfer the files to a larger computer for editing. That said, they are small and light, and accessible, as most people have smartphones with cameras. **Here are my top tips for shooting a great short video:**

- Always film holding the camera horizontally (so that it fits the shape of a TV screen)
- Stand somewhere that is bright (the person facing the light/window).
- Try to get good sound - record in a quiet place, and if you can use an external mic.

beforehand, as sometimes it won't pick up the mic otherwise.

- Have everything prepped and set out in advance to make the progression of filming as painless as possible.
- Use a stand! Better social distancing than having someone else film you, don't worry about the few seconds it takes to get in front of the camera, you will edit those out.
- Take 2 seconds to breathe and centre, smile and.... action! Talk to camera at the start and show your face so people can see who they are listening to. And sum up the salient points at the end of the video if you can, talking to camera.
- Keep videos for Facebook short: 30 seconds to 3 minutes is plenty.
- 7- 10 seconds is long enough for a single shot, and one second pauses between sentences gives you precious editing space.
- Begin with an establishing shot to set the scene, then move to more close ups. Vary long shots and close ups, and get plenty of shots of what the person is talking about. Different types of shots help it 'cut' together better, such as over the shoulder shots examples.

Lockdown Gardening

WITH CONOR O'KANE



- 🌀 You can do a lot in the edit, like getting all your visuals together before doing the narration. However, your speaking-to-camera pieces can't really be overdubbed, it looks and feels wrong. Get them right at the time, if it's too windy outside to get good sound then do it inside, in a greenhouse or polytunnel, or in the house. It's better than having a rattly or crackly background sound.
- 🌀 If you are filling a bed, sowing a tray etc. then film the whole thing, you can show a little of it at real speed, the rest can be speeded up to x6 or x8 times to illustrate the amount of time taken, and give a narrative pause. Try not to do too many speed changes though, it makes it messy.
- 🌀 Do talk over what you are doing while doing it. You don't have to keep that audio file but you can get inspiration for your final voiceover from it.
- 🌀 End with an ask, or a call to action, with further information. Also, videos with "How to" information will get more engagements and be shared more.
- 🌀 Have fun, and just be yourself! If 10 people enjoy and get inspired by your video it's been worth it! If 100 do, that's amazing. You are helping the collective by sharing your knowledge, keep it up and encourage others to do the same.

Editing a video for social media

...and here are my top tips for editing a video for social media

- 🌀 Save your files in an organized way. You might have them in different places but number your files, and save them in folders. You can even have a different folder for each segment of your film. This will make sure you don't leave anything out.
- 🌀 There are different levels of rendering quality. 90% of time you can choose the 2nd or 3rd level of file quality. It can take hours to upload a film to social media, or send to someone else for feedback. These films are mostly being watched on

phone or laptop, so save yourself time and people's data.

- 🌀 Some people have had their video removed for using copyrighted music. Get your mates to give you their free music and credit them. We all have talented mates! Keep the music simple, or record gentle background garden noises.
- 🌀 I ended up downloading Videopad professional by NCH to edit the films. You have to pay, but it isn't much. I tried a few free video editing options but preferred this one, it is professional enough but not overwhelming. It has a direct upload option to YouTube and Facebook. You are able to edit and slow down sound, you can unlink the sound and video, and you can have multiple audio tracks running at the same time, so background noise and voiceover can be layered. Other free video editing software I tried included Movavi, Windows Movie Maker (which you may already have on your computer if you have windows), and Videopad and Filmora 9.
- 🌀 You can use Wetransfer to transfer images between you and other members of your group, it is a good way to transfer large files, and also good way to engage other members of your group in the film making process.

Going LIVE on Facebook

-a few tips on how to get started from Joanne Butler at OURganic Gardens – and a member of Community Gardens Ireland

#GrowTogetherWhileStayingApart!

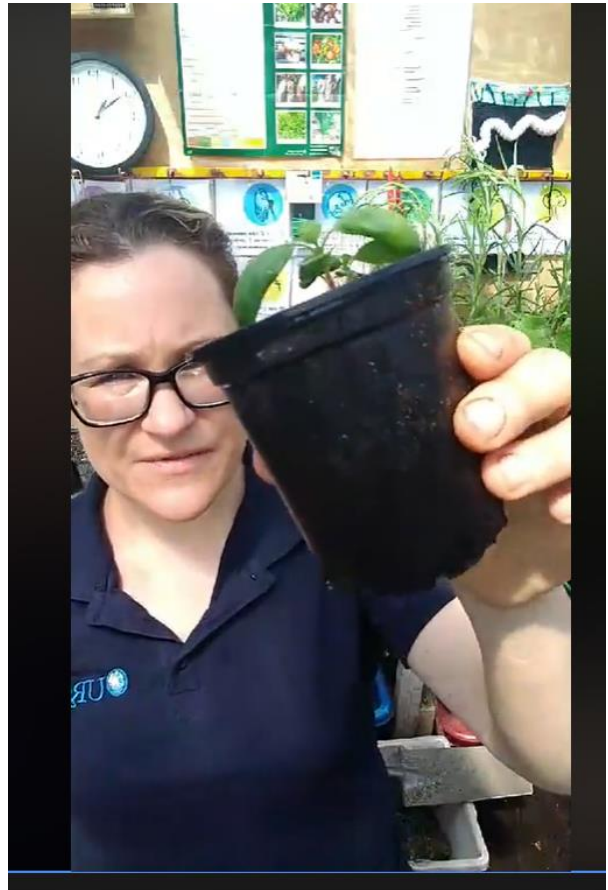
ourganicgardens.ie



As a tutor who normally facilitates her class to a room or garden of keen participants, all giving eye contact, nodding at the appropriate moments and providing the much needed social cues that let you know you're on the right track, the recent shift in what we once considered 'normality' has forced me to step out of my comfort zone and step in front of a camera! When Covid19 came along I knew I had to do something to keep the contact with my community of fellow growers, and standing in my potting shed on 15th March, for the first-time alone showing my phone how to sow seeds with only myself for company, was a pretty daunting experience I can tell you!

It felt quite silly to begin with, as I had the overwhelming feeling I was talking to myself. But then a few numbers began to appear on my left-

hand screen, and suddenly I had my growers back! And it didn't stop there, after my first 'broadcast' as such I realised the reach went through the roof from what we normally got on our Facebook page, we had 50 people watching live on the first day but then the views through the week went into the thousands.



So in a 'feel the fear and do it anyway' scenario I'd recommend the following tips to ensure a smoother introduction to the world of Vlogging (I think that's what they call it!)

- 🌱 Create a visual background for your session – bright colours work well and be mindful that text appears around the wrong way on Facebook live
- 🌱 Be consistent – give out a time and day you're going to do it, stick to a time frame and show up every week – people will get used to you being on line – some have even messaged me to say how much they look forward to a Sunday and Wednesday at 1pm !

- 🌀 Prepare what you are going to cover before hand – keep a log of each session on a clip board so you don't go over old ground, but also so that you have a record to follow up on some things you may cover over the growing period
- 🌀 Film horizontal for Facebook live – there may be a way to fix this but on my phone, it doesn't flip – so be mindful of that
- 🌀 Steady shots – just like any type of filming you don't want your viewers to be seasick when watching – be mindful of how you hold the camera to create a steady shot – I use a small phone stand and only hold it when walking through the garden
- 🌀 Don't be afraid of silence – when using Facebook live people might tune in just to see you working in your garden – giving the viewers an opportunity to listen to the birds while you work will help add to the feeling of them being there with you
- 🌀 Make sure you know if there are any bad internet areas in your garden if you're walking around – I live in rural Donegal so we had to recently upgrade our router to allow me to get the signal to the polytunnel
- 🌀 Allow for questions at the end of each topic – just ask the viewers if they have any questions on what you have just talked about and allow time for them to come in
- 🌀 Make it personal – like me you might have the option on your phone to see the names of the people as they join in, it might be nice for them to hear you say hello etc. (I've even given out birthday mentions at this stage)
- 🌀 And finally, tell your story. If you run out of things to talk about just tell people how your doing – the personal touch will help people feel connected while being apart. Remember this is a difficult time for everyone and what you are doing is helping others in your garden or growing space, and that is a special story in itself!

For more information on OURganic Gardens, see my [facebook](#) page and tune every Wednesday and Sunday at 1 pm in to say hello !



Social Farms & Gardens is a UK wide charity supporting communities to farm, garden and grow together

Contact Us

W: farmgarden.org.uk

E: admin@farmgarden.org.uk

 @FarmGardenNorthernIreland

 @FarmGarden.UK

 @SFarms_Gardens

Supported by the
Community Fund's
People and
Communities
programme.

