Growing fruits and vegetables in controlled environments, such as greenhouses, allows farmers to produce crops that wouldn’t grow well in the natural conditions of that area.

**Greenhouses**

Greenhouses protect crops from natural conditions that can destroy crops, such as storms and frosts. They also trap warmth from the sun, and hold in moisture. This can create excellent growing conditions for many vegetables in places that would otherwise not be suitable. It also means that many vegetables can be grown at times of the year that they wouldn’t grow in the natural environment. Greenhouses are also used to grow seedlings for crops that will be planted in market gardens. The controlled environment means the seeds can sprout and the delicate new plants can grow without being eaten by pests or damaged by bad weather.

Greenhouses are used to grow seedlings that will be planted in the open later.
Hydroponics
Hydroponics is a way of growing plants with nutrients dissolved in water instead of soil. Each plant sits on a tray with its roots in a small container of water. Sometimes there is a mixture of sand, gravel or sawdust in the container to anchor the roots. Carefully controlled amounts of nutrients are fed into the container of water as the plants grow. Hydroponic crops are grown in greenhouses where their conditions can also be carefully controlled.

Hydroponic crops
Green leafy vegetables, especially lettuces and many herbs, are well suited to hydroponic farming. This is because they are fragile plants and so are well protected in the greenhouse. In greenhouse conditions they can be grown all year round. They also require lots of water to grow well. When they are grown hydroponically they get all the water they need, without any being wasted by soaking into the soil or evaporating. Tomatoes can also be grown well hydroponically.

Equipment
Obtaining all the equipment to set up a hydroponic farm can be very expensive. Hydroponic growers must be very knowledgeable about the nutrients and other needs of their plants, as a mistake can cost them their entire crop. Hydroponic fruit and vegetables can be expensive for the consumer due to the high expense of producing the crop.

Did you know?
Australia has more than 400 commercial producers of hydroponic crops such as tomatoes and lettuces.