Fresh Food Essentials

Grow Your Own Vegetables

Grow Your Own Greens

5 ways to put the most nutrient-rich, organic greens on your plate

Get the Essentials!

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You are just days away from fresh-picked greens packed with nutrients

I recently saw a study that listed the 14 vegetables that packed the biggest nutritional punch, and guess what… HALF of them are greens that are EASY to grow right at home (indoors or outdoors)!

And when I say easy, I mean getting fresh greens with just a couple minutes of your love each week.

Greens are FAST, too. From seed to plate, some greens only take a couple DAYS! (Whereas you would have to patiently wait two months for your first tomato to ripen!)

Plus, you'll be shocked at how little space you need to grow all your greens… Even in my tiny Brooklyn studio apartment, I grew all my salad greens indoors with just three tiny trays and grow lamps. Not bad for an endless supply of nourishing, homegrown, organic greens!

So here are 5 ways to grow your own easy greens... indoors or outdoors. Even if you have no garden space and it's winter and it's freezing outside.

Stacey Murphy
GYOV Master Trainer

The first step to a successful garden is knowing what you're going to grow. You'll be shocked at how little space and time you need to grow all your salad and cooking greens. Here's your quick guide to help you decide what to grow based on how much space you have and how long you want to wait before you enjoy your harvest!. ;)

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Your Quick Guide to Greens: Know What You're Eating!

Containers: Shallow containers or trays work best for most varieties
Soil Mix: Start with small bags until you find the potting mix or media that works for you. Do not use garden soil or straight compost.
Choosing Varieties: Order small seed packets to try your varieties out, then buy in bulk to save money.

Sprouts

Seed to plate: 2-5 Days

Sprouts are usually consumed just before or after the first leaves (cotyledons) appear. They can be grown easily, and don't need sunlight. You're eating the tender root of a plant.

It is imperative you keep your sprouts rinsed and clean as the empty seed husks are areas where bacteria and molds are most likely to grow. Many people wash their sprouts in vinegar prior to consumption as a safety measure for killing any bacteria and molds. Very specific seeds are used to grow sprouts to protect yourself from bacteria contamination. Do not feed sprouts to babies and never consume sprouts that contain a foul smell.

Shoots

Seed to plate: 7-10 Days

Shoots are typically grown in a soil media and are consumed once the cotyledons have fully grown and they are about 4-7" in height. Some are harvested before the second set of leaves come in (i.e. sunflower) and others are harvested after multiple leaves arrive (i.e. pea). While you can grow shoots without any sunlight, if you want the pretty green color, you need light.

Shoots are cut, so you are not eating the seeds or seed husks. Many people choose shoots for their crunch, so pea shoots and sunflower shoots are favorites. Sunflower shoots should be eaten before the second set of leaves appear (called the 'first true leaves').

Micro-greens

Seed to plate: 14-21 Days

Micro-greens are consumed once the cotyledons have fully grown and plants are between 3 and 6" in height. Some people harvest microgreens after the second set of leaves (the first true leaves) develop. Micros are typically grown in trays either indoors or outdoors. You must have light for these mini plants to photosynthesize.

Many people like the flavor that these micro-greens pack into small bites and use micro-greens as a spicy garnish or as super fast, baby salad mix. Micro herbs can be grown and harvested in the same way, though most micro herbs take a few weeks to a month longer to grow.

Salad Mix

Salad Mix: 28-35 Days

After the greens pass the microgreen stage, their first true leaves will get larger and the cotyledons will start to yellow and fall off. The plant then develops more leaves. Once the leaves are about 2-3" in size, your plants are considered at the salad mix (also called the 'petite green') stage.

Some salad mix varieties are referred to as cut-and-come-again and some are only harvested once. Salad mix varieties that are not cut-and-come-again should be harvested above the cotyledons. Cut-and-come-again lettuces should be harvested 1" above the soil line.

Braising greens

Braising Mix or Sauté Mix: 30-40 Days

Once the leaves of your plants reach larger than about 4-7 inches, they are referred to as 'braising greens.' In some cases, like kale and chard, the small outer leaves of adult plants are harvested and still considered a braising green.

Braising greens are still tender enough for salads, but some varieties are used for lightly sautéing.

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Your Quick Guide to Greens

You may hear people use some of these terms inter-changeably, but they *are* different. Growing times assume proper plant environmental needs are met. Proper light, water, media, heat, humidity, sanitation, etc. are all factors involved. Most greens thrive at 75° F (24° C) and grow well between 55-85° F (13-29° C).

NOTE: Please use caution when growing your greens and wash properly before consuming. Bad odors are signs of bacterias and molds that may be harmful to humans and animals. If you ever smell anything foul or see anything on your greens that may be signs of pests or disease, discard your greens and soil medium (if any) immediately, properly sanitize your containers and try again. Sprouts have a higher risk for contamination than the other greens because they are grown in just water and seed husks remain.

This guide is for educational purposes only.

Sprouts

Seed to Plate: 2-5 Days

Supplies: Mason jars, sprouting lid -OR- fine mesh with rubber band, place to prop jar for drainage, filtered water, spray bottle (optional), sprouting seeds of choice*

General Care: Soak seeds for several hours. Drain and rinse sprouts, then keep moist (but not too wet) for several days. Rinse every 4-12 hours (variety dependent) with fresh water and drain to keep harmful bacteria from growing. No sunlight needed! You're basically eating the early, tender root of a plant.

Time Investment: 2-4 times a day, rinse the seeds and check for any unpleasant odors that would indicate the presence of unwanted mold or bacteria.

Harvest per Square Foot: Best to grow in small batches as sprouts can go bad quickly, even in the fridge. One or Two Mason Jars are all you need for a week. You can choose to fill it any amount, although it a good idea to limit seed amount to no more than 1/4th jar. This will give the sprouts more air circulation and room to grow.

***Special Notes: Very specific seeds are used to grow sprouts to protect yourself from bacterial contamination. Do not feed sprouts to babies.**

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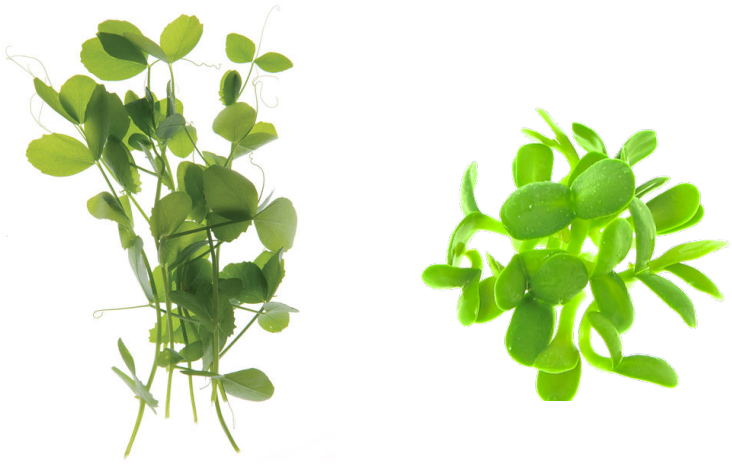
Shoots



Seed to Plate: 7-10 Days

Supplies: Growing Container, potting mix, filtered water, light source, seeds of choice

General Care: Shoots are typically grown in trays indoors or outdoors. If you want the pretty green color, you'll need a minimum of indirect light. Soak seeds for 8 hours in filtered water then rinse -OR- plant directly in soil media. Fill tray evenly with 1" of potting mix or other soil media and lightly press. Scatter seeds {about 1-2 weight oz per square foot (1 oz sunflower & 1.7 oz pea)} evenly on soil and lightly press seeds into soil media.

Cover tray with a clear lid with a few small holes in the top for ventilation. Keep seeds moist and away from direct light. When sprouts are 1/2" high, move under light. Water every other day. Harvest when plants are 4-8" high. Harvest sunflower before the first 'true leaves' come in. Cut shoots 1" above the soil media.

Time Investment: 5 minutes per planting, mist once a day while sprouting, water every other day. Always check for any unpleasant odors that indicate the presence of unwanted mold or bacteria.

Harvest per Square Foot: 8-20 weight ounces

***Special Notes: In shallow containers, soil media will dry out faster than in deep containers.**

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Micro-greens

Seed to Plate: 14-21 Days

Supplies: Growing container, potting mix, filtered water, light source, seeds of choice*

General Care: Typically grown in trays indoors or outdoors. Every variety is different; these are general guidelines. Seeds sprout by night, not by day. If you sprout in total darkness, be vigilant to move your plants under the light at an appropriate time or your plants will be leggy and have a difficult time thriving.

Fill tray evenly with 1" of potting mix or other soil media and lightly press. Scatter seeds (.25 to 1 weight oz per sq. ft. for most varieties) evenly on soil. Lightly press seeds into soil media.

Cover tray with a clear lid with a few small holes for ventilation. Keep seeds moist and away from direct light. When sprouts are 1/4 to 1/2" high, move under light. Water every other day. Harvest when plants are 2-4" high. Cut a half inch above the soil.

Time Investment: 5 minutes per planting, mist once a day while sprouting, water every other day. Always check for any unpleasant odors that indicate the presence of unwanted mold or bacteria.

Harvest per Square Foot: 4-12 weight ounces (variety dependent)

***Special Notes:** Not all seeds can be grown for microgreens. Whatever you grow, be sure the leaves of the plant are edible. In shallow containers, the soil media will dry out faster than in deep containers.

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Salad Mix

Seed to Plate: 28-35 Days

Supplies: Growing container, potting mix, filtered water, light source, seeds of choice*

General Care: Typically grown in trays or in the ground indoors or outdoors. Fill tray evenly with 2-3" of potting mix or other soil media and reduce seed weight to 25% of what you'd use for microgreens to give plants more room to grow. Seed amount is variety dependent.

Lightly press seeds into soil media. Cover container with a clear lid with a few small holes for ventilation. If growing in the ground, cover with soil to depth specified on seed packet. If growing indoors: Keep seeds moist and away from direct light. When sprouts are 1/4-1/2" high, move under light. If growing outdoors: wait until plants are 3-6" tall, then thin as needed.

Water every other day or as needed. Harvest when leaves are 2-4". Cut above the first set of 'true leaves' for multiple harvest. Some varieties are called cut and come again (those may be cut an inch or two above the soil line).

Time Investment: 5 minutes per planting, mist once a day while sprouting, water every other day. Always check for any unpleasant odors that would indicate the presence of unwanted mold or bacteria.

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Braising Mix

Seed to Plate: 14-21 Days

Supplies: Growing container, potting mix, filtered water, light source, seeds of choice*

General Care: Typically grown in deep trays or in the ground indoors or outdoors. Each variety is grown a little different, but these are general guidelines. Fill tray evenly with a minimum of 4-6" of soil. Scatter seeds evenly on soil or soil media. Seed amount it variety dependent. Lightly press seeds into soil media.

Cover container with a clear lid with a few small holes for ventilation or, if growing in the ground, cover with soil to depth specified on seed packet. If growing indoors: Keep seeds moist and away from direct light. When sprouts are 1/4 to 1/2" high, move under light. If growing outdoors: wait until plants are 3-6" in height and thin as needed.

Water every other day. Harvest when plants are 2-4" high. Cut shoots a 1/2" above the soil.

Time Investment: 5 minutes per planting, mist once a day, water every other day. Always check for any unpleasant odors that would indicate the presence of unwanted mold or bacteria.

Harvest per Square Foot: 16-20 weight ounces (variety dependent)

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