



There may not be an easier way to grow your own food than putting sprouts and microgreens on the menu. Instead of farm to table, now we're talking windowsill to table. Growing your own salad greens is easy, cost effective and very healthy. And they taste great!

A recent study by the Department of Nutrition and Food Science, University of Maryland, found that nutrients in microgreens and sprouts far surpassed those in the more mature leaves of the same plants.

Growing Microgreens

Which seeds can I use to grow microgreens?

Use any seeds for lettuces, herbs and vegetables. Try a lettuce mix especially packaged for microgreens for a good start such as Botanical Interests "Spicy Mix" or "Salad Mix". Mixes are selected so different lettuces will be ready to harvest at the same time. If you're going to grow one crop, get what you like. Cilantro, arugula, broccoli, radishes all make great microgreens. Growing microgreens is a small project with big results.

Here's what you'll need to get started:

- A shallow plastic container with holes poked in the bottom for drainage
- Enough potting mix to fill the container with 2" of soil
- A water misting bottle

How to plant:

- Fill the container with 2" of moistened potting mix
- Tamp down the soil, but don't compress it. Use your fingers or a piece of cardboard.
- Spread seeds on the soil.
- Cover the seeds with another 1/8" of potting mix.
- Mist the top layer of soil
- Put in a sunny window. A southern facing window is best, as you'll want 4 hrs. of direct sun on your seeds. If your plants come up looking weak and pale, then they aren't getting enough sun.

How to care for seeds:

- Mist the container once or twice daily.

- In 3-7 days, you'll see your seeds begin to sprout. Continue to mist the plants once or twice daily.

Harvesting:

The first leaves you'll see on the seedlings are the cotyledons or "seed leaves". The next leaves to come will be the first "true" leaves about 7-14 days after germination. When the true leaves unfurl, your greens are ready harvest and eat. Just snip them right about the soil. Yes, the cotyledons are edible too. Enjoy!

Growing Sprouts

Which seeds can I use to grow sprouts?

Any seed which produces a plant whose stem and leaves are edible makes a good sprout. Use untreated seeds from companies such as, Botanical Interests, Creambelt and Hudson Valley Seed Library. These seeds are free of fungicides and other chemicals.

Alfalfa and bean sprouts are the most common seeds to use, but try radishes for some spice and sunflowers for a peppery flavor.

Here's what you'll need to get started:

- A glass jar
- Cheesecloth
- About 3 tablespoons of seeds

Sprouting kits are also available, usually allowing for 4 kinds of sprouts to grow at once.

How to plant:

- Rinse off seeds in clean water
- spread seeds in one layer on bottom of jar.
- cover seeds with water and let them soak overnight or for at least 6 hrs.
- Drain with cheesecloth
- keep seeds moist by soaking and draining a few times each day
- continue to rinse and drain after seeds have sprouted

In 3-7 days, you'll see your seeds begin to sprout depending on seeds used. Continue to mist the plants once or twice daily. Store covered with a paper towel in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Harvesting:

When sprouts are the size you want, take them out of the jar. Eat. Enjoy!