

GROW YOUR OWN MICROGREENS January 29, 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Microgreens are tender young plants used in salads, garnishes, cooking and as a lettuce replacement. Also, a main ingredient of my favorite sandwich! They add color, texture, flavor and great nutrition. Once you decide what method works best for you, they are economical and easy to grow at home.

You must purchase seeds specifically grown for sprouting use from a trusted source. Usually non GMO and organic. Don't ever use seeds purchased to use for gardening. There is a difference.

They frequently taste similar to what they actually will be. Radish seeds are spicy etc and come in a variety of colors. Over 25 types of seeds are available with more being available every day. A new popular one is Red Cabbage. Very nutritious and tastes good. Broccoli, Kale, Sunflower and the spicy mustards are popular.

Three separate things can be done with these seeds. The main difference is when you harvest them.

1. Youngest is sprouts, which many of you may have done successfully. Sprouts are grown in a contained moist environment which can cause problems with mold, fungus, and E Coli leading to many past cases of sickness. Myself included. You eat the whole sprout. Takes 4-6 days to sprout.
2. MICROGREENS. What we'll be doing. Safest and taste GREAT! Once the seeds have sprouted, they grow in an open environment. So, minimal problems with mold or fungus unless grossly overwatered, or kept in a cold, dark place. Microgreens do best with some air circulation and good light, in a room at least 72 degrees. Grow lights are helpful once they have sprouted. Heat mats help speed up germination, discontinue its use after that phase. Usually takes 7-18 days to be ready for consumption. This varies greatly depending on seed type, location and temperature. You eat only the top 1 ½ - 2 inches, not the root. The root will die once harvested and the growing medium is discarded. They usually are grown in soilless growing mediums or on a fibrous type mat that the roots attach to. Some seeds benefit from soaking in water for a day. In my experiments, it was the larger seeds like sunflower seeds that needed this. Once the seed has sprouted it is only watered from below by adding water to the drip tray, sometimes twice a day is needed. They are harvested when 2 true leaves are visible. It will look actually like 4 leaves, but the first two are not actually leaves, but green Cotyledons, which are stored nutrition for the seed.
3. Baby Greens. These are Microgreens left to grow into Baby Greens. Seen in specialty grocery stores. A little more difficult to grow as they need actual soil and fertilization. They take 3-4 weeks to grow.

MICROGREENS DIRECTIONS

NEEDED:

Seeds, medium mix (vermiculite or perlite) 2 trays, 1 with holes the other will hold water, water bottle for misting, Aluminum foil or plastic wrap

1. Put dampened media in a sterile tray 1 inch deep. Spread evenly and tamp down with your hand gently. Must have drainage holes. Soak media first for an hour.
2. Broadcast seeds over the top pretty thickly, and gently press down. Cover seeds VERY LIGHTLY with media. Not much. Presoak any larger seeds for 24 hours first, small seeds don't need soaking and will be a sticky mess if you do.
3. Mist lightly, then cover with plastic wrap, a dome cover or aluminum foil to block the light. (See Tips sheet). Place in drip tray.
4. Set in a warm place. Lift cover and mist seeds and media twice a day with water. More or less if needed. You're trying to maintain humidity until the seeds germinate, usually around 4 days.
5. After germination, remove the humidity cover and start supplying needed moisture by placing water in the bottom drip tray. Never water or mist from the top once seeds have germinated as it encourages disease.
6. Place in good light and check twice daily to see if water is needed in the bottom drip tray. It takes a few days for the roots to work their way down to the water source. Rotate tray daily.
7. Harvest and ENJOY. Don't forget to start another batch.

MICROGREENS EXTRA TIPS AND TRICKS

Use this sheet to keep your own notes of what does and doesn't work for you. And which greens you loved or disliked.

- Exposing the seeds to darkness during the first 4 days of the germination phase seems to help make them extend for the light and have a stronger stem.
- Keep everything clean. Store in a baggie in the refrigerator for up to a week with a few added paper towels to soak up excess moisture. Use a clean sharp scissors or knife to cut above the media mixture. Also easiest to keep them growing and cut and use what you need.
- Remember to rotate trays for best growing.
- Only put one kind of seed in each batch. They germinate at different rates and will overshadow slower germinating seeds.
- Placing trays in the outside colder air during the day a few times, once almost grown will enhance the flavor and make them sweeter.
- To help remove any remaining seed shells, when they are almost ready to harvest, gently run your open palmed hand back and forth across the tops of the greens. They will fall off easily.
- These are extremely nutrient dense. Sunflower greens are a 100% complete plant protein. Very good for us.
- Don't over water the greens. They won't start using too much water until the roots are actively growing. You'll start seeing them when you lift the tray and look underneath.
- It's important to keep in a warmish room, good air circulation and bright light or a sunny window. This is one of the main reasons for failure in the PNW.
- Remember to mist twice daily during germination phase. Easy to forget.
- Remove plastic when they germinate. They need light to reach for the sky!
- Don't be discouraged if the first few attempts don't work out. Keep trying. I threw away 2 batches before I got a good result.
- Amazon has many types of trays to use for this. Go online and read, learn what will work for you.

RESOURCES

WEBSITES to search, type in “Microgreens”

- <https://caldwell.ces.ncsu.edu/2018/02/what-are-microgreens/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/onthegrowfarms/>
- <https://themicrogardener.com/>
- <https://draxe.com/nutrition/microgreens/>

HEAT MAT

- Amazon. Vivosun durable waterproof heat mat , 10”X 21” 2 for \$ 21.00 or Lowes, Home Depot and Garden centers

YOUTUBE LEARNING

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3vnBEvYDZo> On the Grow: How to grow Microgreens
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gdGvT8oEdQ> Garden Answer: How to grow Microgreens
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DskT6ppASjk> (Easy Grow Hydro Page) Beginners guide to growing Microgreens)
- Stick with trusted resources for learning and purchasing seeds. University extensions, Nurseries and folks who do this for a living.

SOILLESS MEDIA MIX. Vermiculite or Perlite, seed starter mix—Lowes, Home Depot

CONTAINERS

- One with holes so water can be absorbed up through the bottom, the other a solid waterproof container.
- Walmart or Amazon.

SEEDS

- <https://www.trueleafmarket.com/collections/micro-greens-planting-seed> Trueleafmarket.com by Mountain Valley seeds
- <http://kitazawaseed.com>
- www.botanicalinterests.com
- Available at our local health food store, Fred Meyers and some nurseries. Buy (Botanical Interest) brand, not regular growing seeds.
- Johnnys Seeds <https://www.johnnyseeds.com/vegetables/microgreens/>
- AMAZON OF COURSE