

Growing Lettuce & Other Greens

Benefits of growing your own

- Fast: short growing season (check range of days to maturity)
- Low cultural requirements: shallow roots, tolerate some shade (check length of daylight needed), thrive in small areas, can use containers
- Economical: loose leaf mixes can be expensive
- Ornamental: attractive foliage

Types of Leafy Vegetables

- Loose leaf lettuce:
Oak Leaf, Red Sails, Salad Bowl
- Loose heads:
Buttercrunch, Bibb, Boston
- Tall upright heads:
Romaine, Cos
- Crisphead or Iceberg lettuce:
More specific
- Spinach:
Asian – cool season or broadleaf
New Zealand -- warm season

Other greens with similar cultural needs

- Arugula: adds a pleasant nutty flavor
- Mustard: provides mild spice
- Bok Choy: best used in stir-fry
- Swiss Chard and Kale: sturdy, cold-hardy plants; cook to serve

When to Plant

- Minimum soil temperature should be 50°.
- Leafy greens grow best at 55°-60°; colder weather will merely slow growth.
- Plant early spring through early summer; late summer for fall harvest.
- Hot weather causes greens to bolt or set seed which can cause leaves to become coarse and bitter. Look for slow-bolt or long-standing varieties.

How to Plant

- Direct sow: remove all weeds, amend soil if needed, level bed, sprinkle lightly with seed, cover seeds with ¼" soil; thin plants to avoid overcrowding.
- Transplants: choose vigorous plants, soak well in pots to ensure thoroughly watered, loosen roots, plant in ground or container.

Cultural Considerations

- Greens are adaptable to various soil types.
- Can be heavy feeders; apply ammonium sulfate at planting time and again in 3-4 weeks.
- Vegetables require approximately 1" of water per week; water greens frequently.

How to Harvest

- Snip entire plant at ground level.
- Pinch off lower leaves allowing plant to continue to produce more leaves.
- Best to harvest in early morning before leaves begin to wilt.

OSU Extension Service resources

Visit your OSU Extension Service office at 200 Warner-Milne Road, Oregon City, for these publications, or get them online at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/ec>

Grow your own lettuce, spinach, and Swiss chard EC 1268

Planning and preparing your vegetable garden site EC 1228

Raised bed gardening FS 270

Gardening with composts, mulches, and row covers EC 1247

For Master Gardener advice

- Call Home Horticulture Helpline: 503-655-8631 (Clackamas Co), 503-725-2300 (Washington Co), 503-445-4608 (Multnomah County)
- Visit Clackamas Chapter Master Gardeners website www.clackamascountymastergardeners.org for 10-Minute University™ handouts
- Look for Master Gardeners at area Farmer's Market