



Growing Microgreens in the Classroom

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The term “microgreen” is used to define small leafy vegetables harvested just as true leaves begin to form. This is typically while they are between one to three inches tall, often within fourteen days of germination. Microgreens are different from sprouts because they are grown in soil and only the above ground plant parts are consumed.

Microgreens, also known as “vegetable confetti”, are typically used as garnishes or in sandwiches, wraps or salads to add color, texture and flavor. Microgreens can even be added to smoothies for an extra serving of vegetables.

Researchers are discovering the health benefits of microgreens such as increased levels of vitamins and antioxidants. Microgreens are easy to grow in the classroom and can be grown any time of year making them a great school gardening project.

Supplies

Potting soil (soil less media)

Seeds (seeds should be labeled “untreated”)

Clean shallow containers with clear lids and drainage holes in the bottom

Adjustable grow light

Large tray or pan to hold containers

Clean sharp scissors for harvesting

Spray Bottles

Optional:

Ruler

Plant tags/markers

Seedling Heat Mat

Salt and Pepper shakers (for small seeds)

Salad Spinner

Directions

1. Start with moistened soilless seed starting mix or commercially available potting soil. Do not use soil from the garden.
2. Fill shallow trays with growing media. Any container with drainage holes that is at least 1 ½ to 2” deep will work for growing microgreens.
3. Sow seeds thickly over the surface of the soil and gently press into the soil for good contact. Larger seeds can be lightly covered with more potting soil.

4. After sowing seeds, cover trays with clear plastic covers or plastic wrap to create a warm, moist environment like a mini-greenhouse.
5. Use a spray bottle or mister to keep sprouting greens well-watered. Place containers in a sink or larger tray to water more thoroughly if soil dries out;
6. Place the trays under a grow light or adjustable light source. You don't need fancy grow lights, a simple fluorescent light bulb will suffice. Keep the light around 4" above the new sprouts to guard against leggy seedlings.
7. Harvest microgreens by snipping plants just above the soil line with clean, sharp scissors when greens reach the desired size. Store in a clean plastic bag in the refrigerator. Wait to wash them until you are ready use them.

Edible crops can be grown as microgreens

A	Days to Harvest	Flavor
Arugula	6-8	Spicy
Basil	8-12	Strong Basil
Beet	11-21	Earthy
Broccoli	8-10	Mild Broccoli
Buckwheat	7-10	Citrus
Kale	10-15	Mild, Earthy
Nasturtium	14-16	Spicy
Sunflower	8-12	Nutty
Pea, Green*	10-15	Sweet
Popcorn**	5-10	Sweet
Radish	10-15	Fresh, Spicy

**Soak seeds in water 8-12 hours before sowing.*

***Popcorn shoots must be grown in darkness for 5-7 days before harvesting. The leaves will be pale green or white.*

Many seed companies offer prepackaged microgreen mixes. These combinations include seeds with similar germination rates so that the greens can be harvested at the same time. They are often grouped by flavor profile such as spicy, mild or colorful. Lettuces are not typically included since they tend to wilt quickly.

Food Safety Concerns

For the safest edible greens, avoid garden soil, manure or compost which may harbor bacteria. Use seeds labeled for consumption as microgreens or labeled "untreated" as some seeds are pre-treated with fungicides. Thoroughly wash recycled or upcycled containers with soap and water. Wash harvested microgreens and drain moisture thoroughly using a colander or salad spinner.

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