



Sprout a Winter Vegetable Garden Indoors

Instructions for how you can grow sprouts indoors and sprout your own nutritious and delicious winter vegetable garden – indoors!

By Tom Meade

About the Author

Tom Meade is a writer, beekeeper and vegetable gardener in Rhode Island.

Though the vegetable garden may have faded to brown, there are plenty of opportunities to have fresh, nutritious and delicious vegetables through the winter – grown in a kitchen cabinet--or even a broom closet!

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Simple Sprout-Growing Steps

It's important to give the seeds plenty of room so they don't crowd one another and prevent sprouts from emerging. You will get the hang of it, but for starters: Seeds In a one-quart jar, add only about two tablespoons of alfalfa seeds, but as much as a quarter cup of mung beans. Soak them overnight. Drain In the morning, invert the screen-covered jar and drain the seeds, saving the water to feed houseplants. Shake the seed so it is evenly distributed when you lay the jar on its side in a dark place. Repeat! Twice a day, fill the jar with water and drain it immediately to rinse the seeds and keep them moist. Some seeds, such as mung beans, will start sprouting in a day. Others take a little longer. When Ready? Most of the common seed sprouts are ready to eat in three to six days.

Vegetable and grain sprouts contain high levels of vitamins, C and B especially, and many minerals.

Even better, sprouts open world of flavor from sweet and malty red winter wheat sprouts to familiar nutty alfalfa sprouts to zingy Chinese radish sprouts.

Crunchy bean sprouts add substance to sandwiches when they're raw, and character to stir-fried dish when they're lightly cooked.

Seeds for sprouting are generally inexpensive. They last for a year or more in storage, and unlike many other stored foods, they maintain their nutrition, ready to burst forth as a sprout.

The best part of growing sprouts is the wonder of it all – watching a bitty seed bear new life to nourish other lives.

For safety's sake, it's wise to buy organic seed grown purposefully for sprouting by a seed supplier who tests for the E. coli bacterium and salmonella.

Asian grocery stores carry mung and other beans that can be sprouted (for a fraction of the seed companies' price) but there are no guarantees that the seed is free of nasty chemicals or bacteria.

For an idea about price, organic sprouting seed from Johnny's Selected Seeds in Maine ranges from \$2.65 for a quarter pound of buckwheat seed to about \$11 for a quarter pound of Red Russian kale seeds, known for their mildly spicy flavor and dark green leaves with pink trim.

Organic Seed Sources

The Sprout House
www.sprouthouse.com

Johnny's Selected Seeds
www.johnnyseeds.com

Territorial Seed Company



www.territorialseed.com

Mumm's Sprouting Seeds
www.sprouting.com

Seed Companies also offer counter-top sprouters to grow sprouts, but Mason or mayonnaise jars work as well.

Make a ventilated draining cap with a piece of window-screening material squeezed to shape over the jar top, and secure it with a strong rubber band around the sides.

Now that you've grown your own sprouts (see recipe), they'll keep for several days in the refrigerator, but they are best eaten fresh in salads, sandwiches, omelets and just about any other dish that benefits from fresh vegetables.