

# Growing Microgreens

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Microgreens are tender young edible seedlings that are easy to grow, fun for kids, and delicious to eat! Here are some basic steps for setting up a microgreen growing experiment:

## **MATERIALS and METHOD:**

- Plastic flats, foil containers, or any container suitable for growing plants that aren't too deep (1-2" depth is ideal if you want to save money on soil materials). The top container should have drain holes for water to run through or for bottom watering. There should be a second container to receive this water drain off. This could be the same type of container as the one you are growing in, just without holes to nest into. Having a plastic lid or covering over the container will increase humidity and aid in seed germination. After the microgreens sprout, it is no longer needed.
- Ideal soil temperature for germination is around 75F. You can use a germination heat mat if you have one, but placing the container with plastic lid in a sunny window at room temperature should do the trick too. Checking the soil temperature with a digital meat thermometer is a fun way to check progress with kids!
- A basic potting soil with a little-added fertility mixed in will be the easiest growing medium. There are organic and conventional versions of this at most garden stores. Any potting soil that will get normal plants through the first few weeks without supplemental fertilizer will do fine.
- Place potting soil mix in container and level off leaving about a half inch gap from the lip of the container. Tamp down lightly on the soil with a flat object to create an even flat surface to place the seeds. The bottom of a tissue box works well.
- Broadcast seeds over the surface evenly (pay attention to the edges) according to the size of the seeds:
  - **For Large Seeds like Radishes: 2-2.5 tbs per standard 10x20 inch flat or 200 in<sup>2</sup>**
  - **For Medium to Small seeds like the mild and spicy Brassica microgreen mixes:**
    - **0.5-1 tbs per standard 10x20 inch flat or 200 in<sup>2</sup>**
    - **Experiment with this seeding density range to figure out best spacing**
    - **Lower density if growing to first true leaf stage (looks like what big plant is going to look like)**
    - **Measure your specific container to find out square inches and scale down seeding rate based on percentage of your area/200 in<sup>2</sup> standard rate**
  - **Plant using the "eye it" method:**
    - **Large seeds: 6-8 seeds/ in<sup>2</sup>**
    - **Small Seeds: 10-12 seeds/ in<sup>2</sup>**

Scan QR code for link to more in depth webinar on microgreen production. Use phone on smart phone or QR reader app.



- Using a mist bottle, moisten the seeds and potting soil. Not too wet, but evenly moist.
- Use paper towels or other cloth material to cover you seeds. Moisten the towel with a spray bottle. Keep evenly moist. Check every day, by gently pulling up towel to see if the seeds have germinated on the surface. Once they send their roots into the soil they will start to push the towel up. Now you can gently remove the towel completely, as well as the plastic lid over your container. Don't worry if you pull a few out, most will be well established.
- You can also use humidity domes or another tray stacked on top of the potting soil and seeds in lieu of using paper towels. If you cover the seeds with potting soil it will stick to the leaves and make a mess.
- Place the tray in a sunny window and rotate as the seedlings lean toward the light to get all sides evenly. This leaning is called "phototropism". Watering from the bottom (putting water into the bottom tray) is the best way to keep the microgreens dry and less susceptible to any diseases. You can water from the top with a watering can that has a delicate water breaker, or just use the spray bottle you stared with. Don't OVERWATER! If the potting soil is evenly moist, then wait until it starts to dry out a little. You'll notice drying first around the outer edge of the container.
- Depending on the size microgreen desired, cotyledon or first true leaf stage, it will take anywhere from 1-3 weeks for them to be harvestable.
- When ready to harvest, CAREFULLY, with a knife or scissors, cut the microgreens about a ¼" to ½" above the soil line. Hold a bunch of the leaves with one hand and cut with the other. This is best done by an adult! WATCHYOUR FINGERS!
- Wash microgreens thoroughly to remove any seeds coats still stuck to the leaves and any reaming soil. This is best done in a colander or salad spinner.
- When tray or container is completely harvested you can compost the remaining stems and soil.
- Do this every week for a continuous supply!
- HAVE FUN!

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