

In the Garden: Growing Your Own Lettuce

Reuters
Lettuce at a
supermarket in
Switzerland



This is the VOA
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Agriculture Report.

Many people have
lettuce in a salad
at the beginning of
a meal. The
ancient Egyptians
and Romans had it

at the end. Either way, gardening experts say lettuce is one of the easiest vegetables to grow in a garden.

There are hundreds of kinds of head and leaf lettuces besides the most popular choices, like iceberg, Boston, bibb and romaine. The best time to plant the seeds is during cool weather. Gardening advisers at the University of Illinois Extension say the best planting temperature is fifteen degrees Celsius.

You can use a seed tray to start the seeds indoors. The container should be deep enough to hold at least three centimeters of soil. Leave about one centimeter of space between the soil and the top of the container. The container should have holes in the bottom so extra water can flow out.

Cover the seeds lightly with soil. If the soil is not already a little wet, give it some water, but not too much. Too much water could drown the seeds.

Next, cover the seed tray with paper. Remove the paper when the seedlings are tall enough to touch it. You can transplant the seedlings into the garden when they are about two to three centimeters tall. Do this when the weather is not too hot and not too cold.

Take out as much of the soil as you can with the seedlings. Plant them in the ground in a hole that is bigger than the lettuce roots. Keep the plants watered, but not too heavily.

Planting seeds every week or two will provide a continuous supply of lettuce to harvest.

Harvest leaf lettuces when the leaves are big enough to eat. Pull the leaves from the outside of the plant so the inner leaves will keep growing. Or cut off the whole plant but leave about two or three centimeters so it will regrow. Cut off head lettuces at ground level.

Lettuce is best when served fresh. The remainder should be stored in a refrigerator in a plastic bag.

Now do the worksheet ...

Level: beginner - intermediate

Time: 20 -30 minutes

This worksheet will help you learn new vocabulary about gardening. You will answer questions about growing lettuce, and write a short paragraph about why people might grow their own lettuce.

1. What is a *gardening expert*?

a person who knows a lot about growing things

a person who is learning how to grow things

a person who does not want to grow things

2. Describe *lettuce*, in your own words.

3. When did ancient Egyptians and Romans eat lettuce?

at the beginning of a meal

at the end of a meal

4. What are the most popular kinds of lettuce?

5. Read the following sentence. Is it *true* or *false*? If it is false, correct the mistake.

The best time to plant lettuce seeds is during warm weather.

6. A “seed tray” is a container that you can use to start growing lettuce seeds indoors. What should this container look like?

7. Why shouldn't you water the seeds too much?

the seeds could drown

the seeds could grow too fast

the seeds could get too big

8. Put the following steps into the correct order from 1-3.

_____ Move the seedlings into the garden when they are about 2-3 centimeters tall.

_____ Remove the paper when the seedlings are tall enough to touch it.

_____ Cover the seed tray with paper.

9. How should you harvest the leaves?

10. Complete the following sentence to make it true.

Lettuce should be stored in a _____ in a _____ bag.

OVER TO YOU

Have you ever tried to grow your own lettuce? What are some reasons why people grow their own lettuce?

Write 5-8 sentences explaining your answer.

ANSWER KEY

1. a person who knows a lot about growing things
2. students' own answers
3. at the end of a meal
4. iceberg, Boston, bibb, and romaine
5. false; The best time to plant lettuce seeds is during cool weather.
6. The container should be deep enough to hold at least three centimeters of soil. Leave about one centimeter of space between the soil and the top of the container. The container should have holes in the bottom so extra water can flow out.
7. the seeds could drown
8. Cover the seed tray with paper.; Remove the paper when the seedlings are tall enough to touch it.; Move the seedlings into the garden when they are about 2-3 centimeters tall.
9. Harvest leaf lettuces when the leaves are big enough to eat. Pull the leaves from the outside of the plant so the inner leaves will keep growing. Or cut off the whole plant but leave about two or three centimeters so it will regrow. Cut off head lettuces at ground level.
10. Lettuce should be stored in a refrigerator in a plastic bag.