

## **Growing Salad Greens A Great Crop for School Gardens!**

### **When can I plant Salad Greens?**

In a greenhouse or cold frame, you can plant these greens from Mid March right on through Early October in our climate. In garden beds (without a greenhouse or coldframe cover) you can plant them anytime from early to mid April, and on through the end of September.

Greens take about 3-4 weeks until you can cut and enjoy them (as “baby greens”) so they are a great crop for schools because students get to experience the process from sowing seeds to harvest, during the spring or fall of the school year.

### **What types of greens are good to grow for salad gardens?**

Any type of lettuce: you can several colorful blends of “cut and come again” lettuce mix from Johnny’s Selected Seeds

Spinach

Pea Greens

Asian Greens: Like Tatsoi, red or green Pac Choi, or Mustard Greens. Or, You can get an “all greens” and “spicy greens” mix from Johnny’s. These are then nice mixed with your lettuces for a colorful, multi-textured and tasty salad.

Arugula

Sunflower sprouts (grow really fast!)

Chard (harvest young for salad size) or Beet greens

### **How do you do it?**

Gently loosen your garden soil (you don’t need to turn it over, better to just gently loosen to keep the soil structure intact), removing weeds or debris. Top with an inch or two of fertile topsoil or compost if desired. Reserve some soil to cover your seeds. You can plant rows, but we prefer to have students measure (and mark with string if you wish) swatches 2-4” wide, each with a different variety of greens. Moisten the soil before planting. Gently and evenly sprinkle seeds in row or swatch. Gently water the area before covering seeds with soil. Then, cover seeds with 1/4” to 1/2” of the reserved soil or compost. Gently water again, and then mark your bed with a label (use pencil or permanent marker) identifying the crop and date. Water gently daily for optimal production. While greens will grow at different rates, in 3-4 weeks you should be able to harvest a salad by cutting the greens with a sharp scissor, leaving about a 1/2” of plant above the soil. You can then continue daily watering, and allow to regrow... and cut and enjoy salads from these same seeds 2-3 times again before replanting!

Other **seeds** that can be sown in the spring: Peas, radishes, carrots, scallions

### **Interplanting other seedlings:**

In late May (after memorial day), you can plant seedlings such as tomatoes, peppers, basil, summer squash or beans in between your rows of greens. That way, as you are harvesting and enjoy your salad before the end of the school year, these “hot weather loving” summer crops are growing and getting ready to fill your garden beds in the summer months.