



# Growing Micro Greens



Micro greens are one of the hottest healthy eating food trends and any one with even a pale green thumb can grow them at home on a sunny windowsill. Easy to grow from seed and requiring little space these tasty, nutrition packed greens are the young seedlings of familiar garden plants such as broccoli, radishes, sunflowers, cabbage and greens such as arugula or beets. Densely planted they are ready for harvest and eating in as little as two weeks. While it is easy to dismiss micro greens as a new version of familiar sprouts, micro greens are different in that you do not eat the seeds but only the leafy top growth. Micro greens also differ from sprouts because sprouts are grown only using water, whereas micro greens are more typically grown with soil. This means they also absorb more minerals from the soil increasing their nutritional content. Because they are capable of more photosynthesis than sprouts, micro greens also develop more nutrients giving them their healthy and nutrient dense reputation.

You can plant your seeds as mixtures or in separate containers to enjoy each flavor separately. These tough little plants need good light, fluffy soil, even moisture and good drainage.

Start with a warm, sunny windowsill (direct sunlight from a south-facing window is ideal) and a small, shallow container. Plastic take-out dishes and disposable pie plates work well, as do clear fruit or salad boxes. If your chosen container doesn't have built-in drainage, poke a few drainage holes in the bottom.

Cover the bottom of the container with an inch or two of moistened potting soil or mix. Flatten and level it with your hand or a small piece of cardboard, taking care not to over-compress the soil.

Scatter seeds evenly on top of the soil. Press gently into the soil using your hand or the cardboard.

Cover the seeds with a thin layer of soil. Dampen the surface with a mister. If you prefer, you can skip this step and instead cover the container with a clear lid, a moist paper towel or plastic wrap until the seeds are sprouted.

While waiting for sprouts to appear, usually within three to seven days, use the mister once or twice daily to keep the soil moist but not wet.

Once seeds have sprouted, remove the cover (if you've used one) and continue to mist once or twice a day.

Micro greens need about four hours daily of direct sunlight to thrive. In winter months, some may need even more. Leggy, pale greens are a sign of not enough sunlight. Light needs can also be satisfied with a grow light that has a low heat output — you don't want to scorch your delicate greens.



If your climate is suitable, micro greens can be also be grown outdoors in the garden in the shade. Like all fragile seedlings, you'll need to protect them from weather extremes and drying winds, not to mention hungry garden pests.

Depending upon the type of seeds you've selected, your micro greens will be ready to harvest about two to three weeks after planting. Look for the first set of "true leaves" as a sign of readiness. Then grab your scissors and snip the greens just above the soil line.

To serve, wash the micro greens with clear water and dry well with paper towels or a salad spinner. Harvest and serve them immediately for the freshest flavor, and add to soups, salads, sandwiches or main dishes. Store remaining cut micro greens in a plastic bag in your refrigerator.

Once you have snipped off all your micro greens discard the planting and start over with new soil and seeds.

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**Some kinds of Seeds to try:**

Amaranth ('Mekong Red')	Cress	Radish (all varieties)
Basil ('Sweet Genovese', 'Dark Opal')	Fennel	Rocket (arugula)
Beets	Fenugreek	Sunflowers
Broccoli	Flax	Wheatgrass
Cabbage	Kale	
Chives (common & Garlic)	Mizuna (mustard streaks)	
Clover	Parsley	
Corn (popcorn is best)	Peas (snow peas are best)	

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**Chard & Micro Green Frittata**

1 clove garlic	2 TBS virgin Olive Oil	2 C Ruby Chard, stemmed & cut into strips	1 C Micro greens
6 large eggs	¼ tsp Salt	¼ C finely graded parmesan	Generous pinch hot paprika

Place garlic and 1T Olive Oil in a 9 ½" skillet over medium heat and cook until the garlic begins to brown; about 3 min. Add the chard, stir, cover and cook until it has wilted and turned dark green; about 25 minutes. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking. Add micro greens and gently stir.

In a large bowl, whisk eggs, salt, parmesan and paprika until just broken up. Preheat broiler.

Add remaining oil to the vegetables and stir making sure it doesn't stick. Pour the eggs over the chard/micro greens mix and let them cook on the stove top until the eggs set on the bottom; 4-5 minutes. Let them set except for about the top ¼ inch on top.

Remove the pan from the burner and place under the broiler about 5 inches from the element. Cook an additional 1-2 minutes until the top is just set and there is no uncooked egg.

Remove from broiler and place serving platter over the top of the pan. Turn the eggs onto the platter. Serves 4.