

# THE ENGLISH GARDEN



## How to sow salad leaves indoors

*We all know that eating salad vegetables is good for our health, but how many know just how easy it is to grow a few salad leaves on a spare windowsill? Growing them yourself means they are fresher than any ready-prepared salad that you can buy in the shops; it is both easy and fun, as described below.*

You don't need to have a greenhouse or even a propagator to grow your own salad leaves. You can sow salad leaves indoors on a sunny windowsill. These tips will help you grow tasty salad from the comfort of your own home.

### **How to sow salad on a windowsill**

Start by selecting the salad leaves you wish to grow. A simple mix of different leaves such as 'Leaf Salad Spicy Oriental Mix' or 'Leaf Salad Winter Mix', which is ready to harvest just three weeks after sowing, is the easiest way to do it.

If you want more control over the salad leaves that you grow, choose seed of individual leaves and then mix them together before sowing. The following crops are suitable for growing for a leafy indoor harvest: Beetroot, rocket, pak choi, lamb's lettuce, mizuna, spinach, lettuce 'Salad Bowl'.

### **Sowing salad leaves – step-by-step**

- Start by filling a pot with multi-purpose compost. Choose a pot at least 20cm wide and 15cm deep. Firm the compost surface with your hands so the compost level is about 1cm from the rim of the pot.
- Place a saucer under the pot, then water the compost using a watering can with a sprinkler head on it. Once the water has drained into the saucer, you are ready to sow.
- Sprinkle the seed on the surface of the compost. Don't worry if some of the seeds are touching, but make sure that the seed is scattered as evenly as possible. Aim for a light covering of seed over the compost surface.
- Cover the seed with a fine layer of sieved compost – or you can use Perlite or Vermiculite – so that none of the seeds are visible.
- Place a large clear plastic food bag upside down over the top of the pot and secure it to the rim of the pot with a strong elastic band.
- Place the pot on a well-lit sunny windowsill in a room that is heated at between 18-22C. Keep checking the pot and add more water to the saucer each time the compost looks pale and dry.
- Germination times can vary but seedlings should appear in 10-14 days. Keep rotating the pot after germination, or the seedlings will start to lean towards the light and can become stretched and 'leggy'.
- Once the seedlings are starting to produce leaves, feed them with a liquid feed such as Miracle-Gro all purpose liquid plant food to encourage rapid growth.
- When the stems have reach 15-20cm long, they are ready to harvest. Cut them with kitchen scissors, leaving half of the plant intact. They will regrow and give you another harvest in a few weeks' time.

Greg Loades (Mar 1, 2018) <https://www.theenglishgarden.co.uk/expert-advice/gardeners-tips/how-to-sow-salad-leaves-indoors/>