



Jacob Martin with micro greens

GROWING MICROGREENS

by Jacob Martin

Greenhouse Manager at Mercer Botanic Garden

Owner, Old School Produce

oldschoolproduce.com

Grow flavor filled, nutrition packed produce at home for exciting, new meal options. Microgreens and sprouts have been around a while, but are just recently becoming popular for the home gardener. People often think of them as difficult, but they are actually quite easy to grow.

The first question people commonly ask is "what is the difference between sprouts and microgreens?" The simple difference is the time of harvest.

- **SPROUT:** Typically, just the germinated seed, mainly cotyledons, usually harvested in 3-7 days.
- **MICROGREEN:** Young, leafy greens or herbs, less than a month old, putting on their first true leaf.

For being such a young plant, some really add a big boost of flavor. If skeptical, just try a pinch of micro-arugula or micro-cilantro. These little vegetables and herbs are a more concentrated form of the full plant, so even the tiniest piece can amp up a dish.

You don't need a special greenhouse or hydroponic system to grow these little plants. A protected part-sun area or patio works just fine.



www.natureswayresources.com

Any two-inch deep, well-draining tray works fine, but 72-cell flats are best for growing microgreens. These trays provide enough depth for the root system to take hold and are the best for minimalizing seed waste, since only five to seven seeds are sown per cell instead of broadcasting through a large, open tray.

The microgreens can be thinned and there will still be plenty of seedlings for the garden. Growing microgreens at home means there will always be some flavor-punch ready to harvest and add to meals.

Of all the different microgreens to choose from, there are some that should definitely be tried, such as micro-cilantro, red amaranth, celery, carrot tops, oriental mustards, bull's blood beets and watercress.

Some sprouts to add to that delicious list are sunflower, radish, and nasturtium sprouts. Next time a plate comes out with these flavorful, little wonders, be sure to give them a taste and find your new favorite.

Contact Jacob Martin at oldschoolproduce.com