

A little guide to growing cress

Cress is a really simple and quick vegetable to grow and you can grow loads of it even if you don't have much space. You'll be sowing your cress seeds in your Sow & Grow cups but you don't actually need compost to sow cress – the seeds will also grow on damp tissue paper or kitchen roll.

You can grow cress seeds indoors at any time of year and you can usually start picking your cress to eat about 1-2 weeks after sowing.



Sowing

1. Start by getting your hands dirty - crumble some compost between your fingers until all the big lumps are gone.
2. Fill your Sow & Grow cup with compost to within about 2 centimetres of the top of the cup.
3. Bang it on the table a few times to help the compost lie nice and flat.
4. Sprinkle the cress seeds onto the soil.
5. Water the soil and leave it on a sunny windowsill indoors.
6. Check your cup every day to make sure the soil is moist – if it's not, water it again (but be careful not to overwater it as the seeds might rot).

Growing

The little seedlings will germinate (appear) really quickly – usually within a day or two. Check your seedlings every day to see if they need water (always use fresh, clean water). If the room isn't warm enough the cress might go a bit mouldy – don't eat it if this happens.



Top Tips

- Watercress is a type of cress that loves to grow in damp soil – you will often see watercress growing by streams and rivers. This can be grown the same way but it needs to be watered more often.
- Cress is often used as a garnish in restaurants. This means that it is used to make dishes look prettier, but it can also be eaten.
- If you can get hold of some more seeds, you could also make your very own Cress Head. All you need is a packet of cress seeds, and a few empty eggshells – sow the cress seeds into the eggshells by putting a little ball of damp cotton wool into the eggshells and sprinkling cress seeds on top. Keep the cotton wool moist by watering it every day. Then, paint a face on the eggshell and, when the cress grows, it'll look like a person with green hair.



Harvesting

To harvest cress, simply cut through the stems with scissors when they're 5cm tall. Cress is very tasty in an egg sandwich, or in a salad.

Note for teachers: after sowing, the cups can be kept in the classroom or taken home by the children if you haven't got much space.

We're keeping an eye out for the best growers in the country, so keep us updated on your Sow & Grow projects with photos, pictures and diary updates here:

sowandgrow.innocentdrinks.com

The best entries will be in with a chance of winning some great prizes so be sure to check it out.