

A little guide to growing spinach



Spinach is a leafy green vegetable that's easy and quick to grow. It's also very good for you because it's low in calories, packed with iron, Vitamin C, Vitamin K and fibre.

Because you'll be growing your Sow & Grow spinach in a little pot, it will sprout as baby spinach and grow little delicate leaves rather than the big ones you sometimes see in the shops.



Sowing

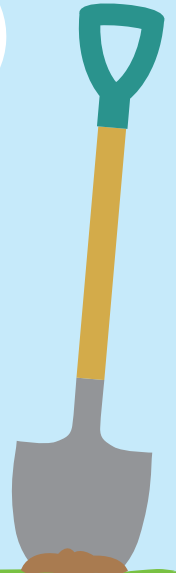
1. Start by getting your hands dirty - crumble some compost between your fingers until all the big lumps are gone.
2. Fill your Sow & Grow cup with compost to within about 3cm of the top of the cup.
3. Bang it on the table a few times to help the compost lie nice and flat.
4. Sow about 10 seeds on top of the compost, making sure they're not all on top of each other (space them about 2cm apart).
5. Add another layer of compost on top (about 1.5cm deep) and flatten it out gently.
6. Water the soil and leave it on a sunny windowsill indoors (but make sure it's not too hot - spinach won't germinate if the temperature is over 24°C).

Growing

Check your cup every day to make sure the soil is moist - if it's not, give it a bit more water. Be careful not to overwater it, though - the soil should feel moist but not be too soggy. The spinach should germinate (appear) within 7-10 days and your spinach should be ready to eat (as little baby leaves) in about 3-5 weeks.

Spinach Facts

- Spinach is believed to have been first grown 2000 years ago in ancient Persia (what is now Iran).
- There was a famous cartoon character who used to eat spinach from cans to give him strength – can you name him?
- As spinach leaves grow they become more bitter, so it's always best to eat them when they are small! Did you know that a pinch of baking soda in the cooking water keeps spinach greener?



Harvesting

When you can see the leaves have grown, use a pair of scissors to cut the leaves down to about 3cm. They might grow back to give you a second crop in another 3 weeks or so. Make sure you rinse the leaves under a tap before you eat them.

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.