



## Supporting school gardening projects

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Developing Positive Minds & Healthy  
Bodies for a Brighter Future!



# KNOW YOUR VEG

## Discover lettuce

Here's the chance for you to discover some of the basic facts about Lettuce as well as essential growing tips. Use these to decide whether you want to grow the vegetable, whether you are able to and what you need to do or look out for in order to grow a bountiful crop!



- Other names:** Lactuca Sativa
- Appearance:** Hearting – wavy outer leaves with a crisp dense centre of leaves with excellent flavour; loose leaf – highly decorative curled or frilly-leaved leaf shapes with some beautiful red varieties that have a slightly bitter taste
- Popular varieties:** Hearting (types include Butterhead, Iceberg & Cos) or loose leaf (types include Lollo); both varieties have a range of colour and taste
- Interesting fact:** Romans and Ancient Egyptians first used lettuce as a way to help them sleep at the end of meal times
- Nutritional value:** A very good source of dietary fibre, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin K, calcium, magnesium, iron and potassium
- When to grow:** Seed outdoors between mid spring to late summer or late summer to early autumn; avoid mornings where weather can be too hot
- Likes:** Full sun in moisture retentive and fertile soil; protecting from cold with cloches or fleece; plenty of watering; fertiliser feed if growing is slow
- Dislikes:** Cold – particularly with early or late sowing of seed; pests – slugs, snails, chafer grubs and aphids
- Harvest time:** Summer time if grown from mid spring to late summer; autumn time if grown from late summer to early autumn
- Watch out for:** Pests – control biologically with treatment that can be watered onto the growing area; grey-mould – in cold and damp summers where any affected material should be removed and space between plants increased; “bolting” or premature growth which leads to bitter tasting leaves and occurs in hot dry weather so ensure regular watering
- Cooking tips:** Cold and raw in a salad with a vinegarettte dressing for extra taste; part of a relish for barbecue food

# Essential Growing Tips for Lettuce

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- Try different types of lettuce in your patch:
  - Cut & Come Again - just cut some leaves and they will grow again. You can do this four or five times before the plant has to be replaced.
  - Crisphead - grows tight heads with leaves which have to be peeled away
  - Cos - long crunchy upright leaves
  - Butterhead - loose leaves with a small head in the centre
  - Loose Leaf - frilly leaves usually red in colour
- Ferny, frilly types of lettuce look good grown among flowers in the flower bed or lining paths.
- Lettuce needs fertile, moist soil. It will grow in soil which is in shade for some of the day. Lettuce can be grown in containers or window boxes . Just make sure the soil is kept moist.
- Sow a little seed every two weeks. This will allow you to harvest lettuce regularly throughout the summer. Sow too much too often and you will find you have too much lettuce to eat and the leaves are wasted. Plants should be removed to the compost when a flower head appears.
- Seed does not need to be sown deeply. Just 1cm (0.5") deep and covered lightly with soil.
- Water in the morning rather than the evening so that the leaves dry off making them less likely to be affected by disease.
- Slugs are the main problem. Use Nemaslug biological pest control or slug barriers such as slug copper rings, eco-friendly recycled boards or slug & snail copper tape to protect the crop. Nemaslug contains nematodes that are tiny microbes which have to be watered into the soil and attack the young slugs as they grow.
- Lettuce can be grown all year. In the late autumn and winter, grow lettuce in a greenhouse or cold frame to protect it from frost. Frost will kill the plants. Use a cloche(s) when growing in the ground to protect the crop.

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**For further information call 0845 402 5300, or visit  
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