



## Spring Into Action!

If you do nothing else in early spring, plant a row of salad greens. Sow them in a big pot, in multipaks for transplanting, or directly in the garden. Wherever you plant your seeds, the rewards will be well worth the minutes spent sowing them!

### Salad Greens and More

The lengthening days of spring will prompt plants of all kinds to grow, though the soils may not be quite warm enough for germination. Take advantage of raised beds and containers, where the soil will be warmer than the ground. You can even sow seeds of lettuce and other greens in containers indoors, then move them out once they germinate.

**Tip: In cold winter regions you can warm cold spring soil by pacing a sheet of clear plastic on your garden bed, weighted down with rocks, 2 to 3 weeks before planting.**



Sow greens such as **arugula, lettuce, and mizuna** directly in the garden, or in containers. For baby greens, sprinkle seed sparingly in wide rows, so that seeds fall about an inch apart and cover them lightly with soil. Start harvesting the young leaves with scissors when they grow to about 4 inches tall, leaving the growing tip intact. You can usually get about three cuttings from a planting.

To grow full heads of lettuce, thin your seedlings when they about 2 inches tall so that they stand 4 to 6 inches apart. Or you can start them indoors and transplant them into the garden. Harvest alternate heads small, allowing the others to grow large.



**Tip: Mesclun mixes contain seeds of various salad greens, which may include lettuces, mustards, chard, and arugula. Sow them in wide rows and harvest them as baby greens for a tasty tangy salad.**



**Peas** germinate well in cool soil, but beware of heavy soils and wet conditions, as the seeds may rot. Compost, added in spring or fall, will improve drainage. Sow peas directly in the soil, as they do not transplant well.

There are early, mid-season, and late peas, so choosing more than one variety can extend your harvest. Snow peas and snap peas have edible pods; garden peas do not. And vine sizes vary greatly, from 6 or more feet tall to less than 2 feet. Some are even suitable for containers.

Almost all peas require some support. Set up supports or trellises at the time of planting. This can be as simple as putting sturdy branches in the ground 2 feet apart, or planting your peas near an existing fence. You can also create a simple bamboo and string trellis. Plant seeds

about 2 inches apart and an inch deep. Generally, peas do not require fertilizer, or even thinning. Don't allow the soil to dry out, especially once flowers and pods start to develop.

**Tip: Prevent peas from rotting in the ground before they germinate by pre-sprouting them. Place seeds between layers of wet paper towels in a plastic bag. Keep them at room temperature and check daily. When the seeds have plumped up and sent out a root tip, plant them.**

**Spinach** must be planted early if you want to get a spring crop, as it does not tolerate heat. Be sure to mix compost into the planting row prior to sowing. Plant seeds about an inch apart, thinning seedlings to stand 3 to 5 inches apart, and side dress your plants with an organic fertilizer when they approach a harvestable size. Spinach can be harvested leaf by leaf until it begins to bolt. At that point, cut the whole plant at the base. Or, cut the leaves when they reach a height of 4-5 inches, leaving 1-inch crowns to re-grow.



**Tip: Fall-planted spinach will often overwinter and resume growth in spring for a super early crop.**



**Asian Greens and Radishes** are fast and easy spring growers. Sow seeds directly in the soil in rows and begin harvesting in as little as a month. Thinning is essential for these plants, as they will promptly bolt if too crowded. Radishes should be thinned to stand 2 inches apart; bok choy and tatsoi should be 6 to 8 inches apart.

There are plenty of other vegetables suitable for spring sowing, including **Carrots, Beets, Turnips, Swiss Chard, Kale and Brassicas of all types**. March is time to spring into action!

**Tip: You can combine early season vegetables in a single large container.**