

# GROWING YOUR OWN SPROUTS

## A GUIDE TO GREEN CITY LIVING

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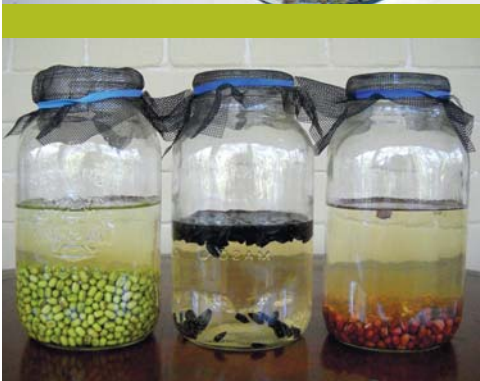


Evergreen

**Tip:** Try saving some seeds from the garden to sprout! Radish is an easy one to start with. Just let them go to seed and harvest when dry and ripe.



Nao Ito



### Did You Know?

Sprouts are baby plants, germinated from seeds, grains or legumes. When these seeds grow, they produce edible sprouts that are highly nutritious—not to mention delicious!

### Why Sprout?

- Extend your growing season and enjoy a fresh supply of nutritious greens year-round.
- Save money by growing organic, fresh greens at home—sprouts are cheap, even the organic kind!
- Supplement your diet with highly nutritious vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants. In addition to having many of the proteins pre-digested, sprouts contain an ample supply of live enzymes, which allow them to be easily digested and assimilated by the body.
- Sprouting can be beautiful, adding color to the kitchen or any other room in the house.

### What You'll Need

One-litre, wide-mouth glass jar (with lid for storage)

Fiberglass screen (about 10cm square—available at a local hardware store)

Elastic band

Sprouting seeds (about 2–4 Tablespoons if the seeds are small, more if they are larger)

Fresh water

### Setting up Your Sprouts

1. **Sterilize** – Immerse all materials (except the seeds) in boiling water.
2. **Soak** – Put the seeds in the jar, cover tightly with the screen, and secure with the elastic band. Add water, swirl, and drain. Add 2 cups of cool water and soak for 4–8 hrs.
3. **Strain** – Pour water out through the screen. Turn the jar upside-down, and prop at a slight angle to ensure proper airflow (a dish-rack or bowl works well).
4. **Keep Rinsing** – Rinse your sprouts as often as possible (at least twice a day). Sprouts will be ready in 5–10 days, depending on the type of sprout, and how you like to eat them. As a guideline, harvest sprouts when they are 3–5cm (1–2 inches) long.
5. **Eat!** – Sprouts are most nutritious in their freshest state. To store, you can leave them in the sprouting jar (replacing the screen with a metal lid), or in a plastic bag with the air removed. Place in the fridge for up to 2 weeks. If you notice that your sprouts have a bad smell, do not eat them.



## What Kinds of Sprouts Can I Grow?

Almost any seed, grain or legume can be turned into edible sprouts. There are just a few (such as kidney beans) that don't work for sprouting. Here are some popular ones to try at home: alfalfa, clover, broccoli, sunflower, cabbage, pea, radish, chickpea, lentil, mustard, adzuki bean and quinoa.

## Tips and Tricks

- Make sure your container is big enough to accommodate the volume of sprouts that will be produced. Seeds soak up two to three times their dry volume in water, and sprouts need at least six times the volume occupied by the seeds.
- Make sure your hand can fit in the jar!
- Sprouting time will depend on the type of seeds used. Generally, look for ½ inch tails before you harvest. Test at various points, and harvest according to taste.
- Sprouts grow best between 18°C and 25°C (65°F and 75°F).
- Avoid purchased garden seeds unless you know they aren't treated. Most natural food stores sell common sprouting seeds. If you know a farmer who grows the seeds you want without chemicals, buy in bulk. Most seeds keep for a year or more in a cool dry place.

## Sprouting in Soil

Another great way to produce edible sprouts at home is to grow them in a growing substrate such as soil, compost or coconut coir. It can require more space, but if you're concerned about possible health risks associated with jar sprouting (see sidebar), it's a fail-safe way to grow larger quantities of sprouts—risk free. For more information on how to do this, follow the links.

## What About the Health Risks?

You may have heard of certain health risks related to bacterial contamination when growing or eating sprouts at home. This is the result of micro-organisms that are found naturally on fresh fruits and vegetables, most of which are harmless. To be extra safe, use certified organic seed, rinse sprouts regularly and treat sprouts as you would any nutritious food – refrigerate until used. If you'd like to know more about this topic, there are many sprouting resources which will provide such information, including those listed in the column to the left.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Mumm's Sprouting Seeds** [www.sprouting.com](http://www.sprouting.com)

**Toronto Sprouts** [www.torontosprouts.com](http://www.torontosprouts.com)

**International Sprout Growers Association**  
[www.isga-sprouts.org](http://www.isga-sprouts.org)

**Sprouts: The Miracle Food – A Complete Guide to Sprouting.** Steve Meyerowitz.  
Sproutman Publications, 1999.

**Society for Ecological Restoration** [www.ser.org](http://www.ser.org)

**Ecological Society for America** [www.esa.org](http://www.esa.org)

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