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G88-886 Growing Sprouts

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Growing Sprouts

Ways to grow different sprouts are discussed in this NebGuide.

Debra Schwarze, Extension Assistant, Horticulture

- [Sprouter's Guide](#)

Sprouts are tasty and delicious, and growing them is a simple process, although it does require a few minutes of your time each day to get quality sprouts.

They can be grown year-round, and provide an opportunity for simple gardening projects for limited spaces and for children. Seeds often used for sprouting include mung bean, soybean, lentil and alfalfa.

When purchasing seeds for sprouting, be sure to get seeds that have not been treated with a fungicide, insecticide or any other material. This type of seed is available at health food stores and many supermarkets.

To grow sprouts, begin with a clean, wide-mouth quart jar. This size jar allows you to grow up to two cups of sprouts with little difficulty. The wide mouth allows easier removal of the sprouts with minimal damage.

Cover the bottom of the jar with the desired amount of seed, generally not more than 1/4 cup. (Depending on the type of seed that is used, only one to two tablespoons may be required to fill a jar.)

Cover the mouth of the jar with cheese cloth and secure with a rubber band or screw-top ring, or use a commercially available screw-top sprouting lid. Soak the seeds for 8-12 hours in a volume of water at least double that of the seeds. This will soften the seed coat for sprouting.

After soaking, drain off the water and rinse the seeds. After the rinse water has been drained off, invert the jar and prop it at an angle with seed distributed evenly along the side of the jar. By placing the jar at an angle, the sprouts will have good drainage and air circulation (*Figure 1*).

Keep the jar in a dark place, at 68° to 70°F. Sprouts grown in a light location will turn green and may be bitter and tough.

Continue to rinse the sprouts two to four times a day until they have grown to the desired length. Always

be sure excess water is drained off the sprouts; if the sprouts remain in the water they could ferment and spoil (*Figure 2*).



Figure 1

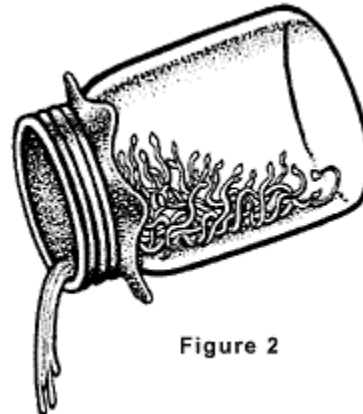


Figure 2

Some seeds need only to be sprinkled over a moist cloth or paper towel to sprout. Again, keep the seeds in the dark while they sprout, and keep them moist.

Most sprouts will take two to five days to grow to their optimum size. Wash them thoroughly to remove the seed coat, if necessary. Sprouts may be kept for one to two weeks in the refrigerator if kept in a sealed container. Sprouts may be frozen by blanching them over steam for three minutes and cooling them in ice water. Drain them and pack into freezer containers.

One cup of raw mung bean sprouts contains 48 calories, 6.5 grams of protein, 1.5 grams of fat, and 5.6 grams of carbohydrate. One cup of cooked bean sprouts contains 48 calories, 6.6 grams of protein, 1.8 grams of fat, and 4.6 grams of carbohydrate.

In addition, sprouts are a good source of minerals and vitamins, particularly vitamins B₁, B₂, and C.

Sprouter's Guide

Sprouter's Guide--a list of suggested seed that you can sprout, and information regarding methods, yield, and use.

Seed	Desired sprout length	Average sprouting time	Sprout yield (for desired lengths)		Proper sprouting method	Can be eaten raw	Average cooking time
			seeds used	sprouts obtained			
Adzuki	1/2 to 1 inch	4 - 5 days	1/4 cup	1 cup	Soak & rinse	Yes	8 - 12 minutes
Alfalfa	1 to 1 1/2 inches	1 - 2 days	1 cup	2 1/2 cups	Soak & rinse	Yes	3 - 5 minutes
Barley	Seed length	3 - 5 days	1/2 cup	1 cup	Soak & rinse	No	8 - 10 minutes
	1/2 to 1		1/4	1 1/4			8 - 15

Bean	1/2 inches	3 - 5 days	cup	cups	Soak & rinse	Yes	minutes
Buckwheat	Seed length	2 - 4 days	1 cup	2 1/2 cups	Rinse & sprinkle only	No	8 - 15 minutes
Cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kale	1/2 to 1 inch	3 - 5 days	1/4 cup	1 1/4 cups	Soak & rinse	Yes	3 - 8 minutes
Chia	1/8 to 1/2 inch	1 - 2 days	1/4 cup	1 cup	Sprinkle only	Yes	
Chickpea or garbanzo	3/4 to 1 inch	5 - 8 days	1 cup	3 1/2 cups	Soak & rinse 4-6 times a day	Yes	10 - 20 minutes
Cress	3/4 to 1 inch	2 - 4 days	1 tbsp.	3/4 cup	Sprinkle only	Yes	
Fenugreek	1/2 inch	3 - 4 days	1/4 cup	1 cup	Soak & rinse	Yes	2 - 4 minutes
Lentil	1/4 to 1/2 inch	3 - 4 days	1 cup	2 cups	Soak & rinse	No	3 - 8 minutes
Millet	Seed length	3 - 5 days	1 cup	2 1/2 cups	Soak & rinse	No	8 - 10 minutes
Mung bean	1/2 to 3 inches	3 - 8 days	1 cup	4 cups	Soak & rinse	Yes	2- 5 minutes
Oat	Seed length	3 - 5 days	1 cup	2 1/2 cups	Sprinkle only	No	8 - 10 minutes
Pea	1/4 to 1/2 inch	3 - 4 days	1 cup	2 cups	Soak & rinse	No	3 - 8 minutes
Radish	1/2 to 1 inch	2 - 4 days	1 tbsp.	3/4 cup	Soak & rinse	Yes	
Rice	Seed length	3 - 4 days	1 cup	2 1/2 cups	Soak & rinse	No	8 - 10 minutes
Rye	Seed length	3 - 5 days	1 cup	2 1/2 cups	Soak & rinse	Yes	3 - 5 minutes
Sesame	Budded only	2 - 5 days	1/4 cup	1/3 cup	Soak & rinse	No	Oven roast
Soybean	3/4 to 1 inch	4 - 6 days	1 cup	3 1/2 cups	Soak & rinse 4-6 times a day	Yes	10 - 20 minutes
Sunflower	Budded only	5 - 8 days	1 cup	2 cups	Soak & rinse	No	Oven roast
Triticale	Seed length	1 - 3 days	1 cup	3 cups	Soak & rinse	Yes	8 - 10 minutes
Wheat	Seed length	4- 5 days	1 cup	4 cups	Soak & rinse	Yes	8 - 10 minutes

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