

Salad Leaves



Plant group: Salad leaves

Start under cover: February/March - September

Plant out: April – October

Sow Directly: March - September

Harvest: March – November

Choosing Seed

Use organic seed where possible. Good sources are:

The Reading Food Growing Network (www.readingfoodgrowingnetwork.org.uk) seed swap events,

The Organic Gardening Catalogue (www.organiccatalogue.com)

or The Seed Co-operative (www.seedcooperative.org.uk)

Varieties are many and varied, try lettuce, rocket, frilled varieties and different coloured leaves.

Sowing and Planting

Generally, sow from February in trays in a warmish light place, or on a windowsill. Sow every few weeks for a good succession of leaves throughout the summer. Sow in the ground from mid-April, thinly in rows about 15cm apart.

Rocket can be sown in the ground or in outdoor containers from March through to September and can be grown in a greenhouse over winter if you want to have an all-year-round harvest. Rocket does like to bolt in hot weather, so keep it watered and pick off developing flower heads to help prevent the plants from going to seed.

Harvesting

Pick salad leaves when they are about 10cm long for baby leaves and you will be able to cut and come again several times. Some lettuces can be left to grow bigger and form hearts – check your seed packet for details.

Beware of slugs and snails who will be as interested in your salad leaves as you are.

Storing

Salad leaves will not store for long and should be eaten on the day of picking if possible.

Growing in Containers

Salad leaves are easy to grow in containers inside or outside.