



Growing Greens – Year Round

The below is for growing greens – however, check out the General Vegetable Gardening Tip for additional information.

Greens to Consider by Season

1. **Spring:** lettuce, spinach, kale, Swiss chard, and root vegetable tops.
2. **Summer:** Swiss chard, sweet potato greens, and non-traditional spinach.
3. **Fall:** lettuce, kale, arugula, Swiss chard, spinach, cabbage, Bok choy, and mustards.
4. **Winter:** spinach, arugula, lettuce, kale, Swiss chard, cabbage, collard greens, Bok choy, and mustards.
5. Use succession planting for continuous harvesting, and in warm months “heat tolerant” & “heat resistant” varieties.

Information on Specific Greens

1. **Lettuce** is easy to direct sow or transplant into the garden – Varieties to Consider:
 - a. Cool-season varieties (best planted from September to February) - Romaine: 'Parris Island Cos', 'Red Romaine' - Butterhead: 'Buttercrunch', 'Tom Thumb' - Leaf lettuce: 'Red Sails' - Crisphead: 'Great Lakes', 'Ithaca'
 - b. Warm-season varieties (best planted from March to August) - Romaine: 'Jericho', 'Nevada' - Leaf lettuce: 'Red Fire', 'Salad Bowl', 'Black Seeded Simpson' - Batavian (Summer Crips): 'Nevada', 'Sierra'
 - c. Planting to harvest generally takes 65 to 80 days for summer planting and up to 130 days for winter planting.
2. **Arugula** is a cool-season crop – for best results, plant from September through April.
 - a. Varieties to Consider includes- Astro, Rocket (also known as rucola), Runway
 - b. For summer planting - try these heat-tolerant varieties - Slow Bolt (peppery flavor), Wild Italian arugula, Wild arugula (known as Wild Rocket) (perennial plant)
 - c. Planting to harvest generally takes 25 to 50 days depending on the variety.
3. **Spinach** is classified according to leaf type – and is best grown from August through March.
 - a. Types - Savory (wrinkled) – Bloomsdale, Semi-savory - Tyee (heat tolerant), Catalina, and Smooth (flat) – Space, Melody, Indian Summer (heat tolerant)
 - b. Planting to harvest generally takes 21 to 50 days depending on the variety.
4. **Non-traditional Spinach** varieties are often more resilient to heat and humidity than traditional spinach, making them excellent choices for summer gardens –
 - a. Consider Malabar spinach, New Zealand spinach, Egyptian spinach also known as Molokhia or Jute leaves, Orach also called mountain spinach, Longevity spinach, Okinawa spinach, Caucasian spinach also known as climbing spinach, and Sissoo spinach also known as Brazilian spinach or samba lettuce.
5. **Cabbage** (green, red, and savory) and **Asian brassicas** (Bok choy, and napa cabbage), thrive in cool weather - For best results, start seeds indoors 4-6 weeks before planting.
 - a. Fall/Winter crop (plant from late August to early October)
 - b. Spring crop (plant January to March)
 - c. Summer crop (heat-tolerant varieties) (plant March to April) consider Green Boy or Charmant
 - d. Planting (in the ground) to harvest generally takes 70 to 100 days depending on the variety.
6. **Swiss Chard** can grow year-round in Ventura County – but main planting is September to April.
 - a. Varieties with various colored stems include.
 - b. Heat tolerant varieties –'Perpetual' (slow to bolt), 'Silverado' (compact), and 'Fordhook Giant' (white stems).
7. **Kale** can grow year-round in Ventura County – but the main planting is September to April.
 - a. Varieties include Curly kale: 'Winterbor', 'Vates', Lacinato (Dinosaur) kale: 'Nero di Toscana', Russian kale: 'Red Russian', 'Redbor', and Baby kale: 'Salad Savor'.
 - b. Heat-tolerant varieties - 'Lacinato', 'Red Russian', 'Dwarf Blue Curled Vates' and 'Siberian' kale.
 - c. Harvest young, tender leaves in 60-75 days after planting – but leaves can be harvested year-round.



Basic Care: QR code will take you to the Soil to Sprouts slide deck on the Ventura County Master Gardener website

- **Seeds or Transplant** – Transplants produce earlier harvest and often have multiple plants in each container - separate by soaking.
- **Mulch the Soil Surface** – Apply a 3-4-inch layer of organic mulch.
- **Watering** – water deep - overhead watering can lead to diseases.
- **Support (indeterminate)** - trellis, stake, or cage.
- **Fertilizer** – Use a General Purpose (10-10-10) fertilizer. High nitrogen fertilizer will increase green growth – not fruit.
- **Using Raised Beds or Containers?** – use potting soil or blend of compost/topsoil/vermiculite.



Methods for Harvesting

- a. **Cut and Come Again Method** - Most common/efficient method for most leafy greens – harvest outer leaves first, leaving the center intact. Repeat every few days or weekly.
- b. **Bottom-Up Method** - Ideal for plants that grow from a single stalk (kale, collards) - remove the oldest, lowest leaves first and work your way up the plant.
- c. **Outside In Method** - Best for plants that grow outwards (chard) -harvest the larger, outer leaves first.
- d. **Whole Plant Harvest** - Use at the end of the season or for head lettuce or cabbage - cut entire plant at the base.
- e. Remember that different plants may have slightly different optimal harvesting methods, so observe your plants' growth patterns and adjust your approach accordingly.

Learn more about the Ventura County Master Gardener
using this QR to visit the website.

