



## Growing your own micro greens or shoots

**Micro-greens (Shoots)** Micro-green seeds are planted and grown in soil or a soil substitute such as peat



moss, coconut coir or other fibrous materials. They are ideally grown in warm conditions with low humidity and good air circulation. The seed density is high so that shoots can be harvested by hand with a kitchen knife (or scissors in the classroom). Most varieties require 5-7 days growing time, but some can go for 4-6 weeks. After the leaves are fully expanded the micro-greens are ready for harvest. They are cut above the soil surface and packed without any roots. Some micro greens (like wheat grass) are sold while still growing, rooted in soil or other growing medium, so that they can be cut by the end user.

The conditions that are ideal for growing micro-greens do not encourage the growth of dangerous pathogens.

**Commonly grown zesty varieties of micro-greens include:** Amaranth, Arugula, Beet greens, Basil, Cabbage, Chard, Chervil, Cilantro, Cress, Kale, Lemon Grass, Mustard, Nasturtium, Parsley, Radish, Sorrel and Tot Soi.

**Sweet Varieties include:** Sunflowers, Dwarf Gray Snow Peas, Mache, Mizuna Dandelion, Spinach Mesclun Mix, and Watercress.

Ideas for future shoot growing:

<http://www.jonathansorganic.com/Nutrition%20Facts%20Label.htm>

<http://www.sprouting.com/canstore/contents/en-ca/d1.html>

<http://www.johnnyseeds.com/c-48-micro-greens.aspx>

<http://www.mvseeds.com/microgreens.html>



Sunflower shoots on a slice of heirloom tomato, with cheeses and onion... on a bagel. YUM!

## Shoot Production:



- 1- Re-hydrate your soil brick in tepid water. One brick will fill two trays.
- 2- Move wet soil into tray. You should have 1 1/2 to 2 inches of soil in the tray. Reserve about a pint of wet soil for on top of each tray that you are preparing.

3- Spread out seed on the damp soil. Leave no more than 1/2 inch of space anywhere on the soil surface.



4- Put your tray in the bathtub or large sink and soak with a sprayer (so that the seeds get wet). Water should run out the bottom just a little.

5- Throw (a couple of hands full) of the remaining damp soil on top of the seeds. Do not cover them up. Just enough to keep them damp.

6- Cover your seed bed with the second tray. It can set right down on the seeds. Do not put any weight on it.

7- I like to set it in the sun for a couple of hours so that it will warm up... in the winter, a household heating vent or heat pad will work. Do not dry out the soil. Low E or energy saver household windows block the sunlight that is used by plants.. it will not help. If you wrap your tray (to trap in the warm air), you can move it to your car in cold weather... if it's warm in there... if the car windows are not tinted... They will grow with or without sunlight.



8- Leave it covered for at least 3 days.

9- Water the tray in the bathtub about every 3 days.

10- When the top tray starts to lift up, turn it over so that there is more space for

growing. Leave the taller top on for at least one more day.

11- Take off the cover when the shoots get too tall for it to stay on.

12- Leave it in whatever sunlight you can find for at least 24 hours. You can continue to grow that tray of shoots for 2-3 weeks... just harvest with a knife above the surface of the soil. Rinse and eat when you want.

## Don't throw it away!



1- After you have finished harvesting, turn the whole tray of soil and roots over and sift out the plant material from the soil. (I use a piece of 1/4 inch hardware cloth that I built a wooden frame for... ).

2- Reclaim the soil for your next planting.

3- Put the plant parts into your composting pile – or feed it to your worms.

4- Start over.



## Harvesting tips:

- Sunflowers should be harvested with the tiny permanent leaves start to show. If you wait too long, the shoots will get bitter.



- Pea shoots should be harvested when the tendril at the top starts to curl. If you wait too long, there will be a fibrous thread in the lower part of the stem, and it'll act like dental floss as you eat. (Icky)

- Smaller seeds like radish and dandelion take the same number of seeds per inch in the tray... the seed are small, but it will make a BIG plant, eventually. It will look MUCH less crowded when you plant. Sunflowers and peas should look crowded.