

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

From Seed to Harvest: A beginner's guide to growing spinach

Nutrient-dense, brilliant green and a quick growing crop which yields leafy pickings during multiple seasons, spinach is a great choice for beginning gardeners. Spinach is known as a cool-weather plant, meaning it excels in the spring and fall months. During the summer, the plant will produce a flowering stalk and bitter leaves. This is called bolting. Different varieties of spinach can be used to create a colorful bouquet of varying tastes in one's garden.

To plant:

For a spring crop, spinach can be planted as early as four to six weeks before the last frost date, or as early as the soil is able to be worked. Plant seeds in a shallow rut about a quarter-inch deep and an inch apart. Cover the seed with soil and press gently.

For a fall crop, plant seeds up to two months before the first frost. Soil that is too warm can hinder the plant's growth. As spinach grows quickly, it is suggested to not plant indoors more than two to three weeks prior to moving the plant outdoors.



Renegade Spinach seeds available at ufseeds.com

To grow:

During its growth, fungus can become an issue in cooler months. Space your plants far enough apart to allow for air circulation. If plants grow crowded together, thin them to allow two inches between each crop. Rabbits and other critters will feed on the spinach, so take action such as setting up plant cages or netting to protect the leaves. Water regularly, and keep soil moist with mulch.

Fertilization can include blood meal, cottonseed, composted manure or liquid fertilizer, though spinach is a quick grower and gardeners may want to only revert to fertilization if their spinach is experiencing slow growth. Radishes planted nearby spinach will attract leaf miners away from spinach leaves. The leaf miners don't harm the underground radish.

To harvest:

To harvest your spinach, begin by removing outer leaves first. Leaves are ready once they are large enough to eat according to each individual gardener's taste. Picking outer leaves first also delays bolting. Once the plant begins to bolt, gardeners can pull the whole plant to harvest the leaves before they become too bitter. It is also possible to cut the plant about two inches above the soil when it begins to bolt and it may produce again. In colder climates, gardeners can cover their crop with hay, and it may sprout again in early spring.

What spinach craves:

Spinach grows best in temperatures between 35 and 75 degrees. It also prefers full sun but can survive in partial shade. Spinach thrives in a well-drained soil with a pH of 6.5 to 7.



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Where to buy spinach seeds:

Urban Farmer offers many varieties of spinach, ranging from traditional plants to Malabar Red Stem, a climbing spinach. To buy spinach seeds, check out our website at ufseeds.com!



[Malabar Red Stem seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)



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