

Lettuce

Lettuce is the third most consumed vegetable in the United States. There are over 800 varieties of lettuce in America, the most common are shown in the picture:



Benefits and nutritional information:

- Lettuce is not eaten for its nutritional content, although it does contain significant levels of vitamins and minerals. Nonetheless, it is 95% water and very low in calories.

Starting:

- Lettuce seeds are sown directly into garden rows.
- The seeds are quite small and care must be taken not to plant too many of them since it makes the job of thinning difficult. One recommendation is to mix the seeds with fine, dry soil before sowing.
- Seeds should be planted 1/4" deep, in rows 24" apart.

When to plant:

- Lettuce is among the first vegetables to be planted in our area. The seeds can germinate when soil temperature is 35 degrees, and it has a 70% germination rate at only 45 degrees.
- Seeds can be planted about once a month for a steady supply.

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- Summer planting will yield leaves that taste bitter, and the plants are prone to bolting.
- Lettuce grows well with cucumbers, carrots and radishes.

Thinning, training

- As plants begin to grow, thin out smaller, weaker ones.
- Eventually spacing of lettuce plants should be 8" to 12".

Signs of over-watering, nutrient deficiency

- Lettuce requires a constant supply of water while growing; however, soil that's waterlogged will prevent roots from absorbing water or nutrients and the plants will die out.
- With its shallow root system, lettuce may benefit from an extra application of a balanced (5-5-5) fertilizer every 3 weeks or so once it begins producing a crop.

Pests and pest controls

- Insect pests include [Aphids](#), [Flea Beetles](#), [Cutworms](#), [Thrips](#), and [Slugs](#). Slugs are the most aggressive and troublesome on lettuce.
- Diseases: [Damping-off disease](#), [Downy Mildew](#), [Leaf Spot](#)

Harvesting

- With leaf lettuce, you can harvest outer leaves and the plant will continue to grow and re-sprout more leaves.