



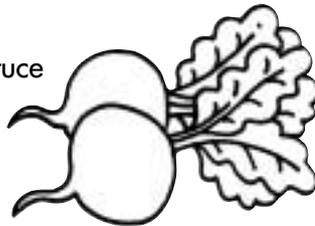
We Can Grow a Salad!

Tending a garden shows children firsthand that fruits and vegetables don't just come from the supermarket—they are plants that grow in or under the soil and on vines, bushes, and trees. Just as they are learning that they need fruits and vegetables to grow healthy bodies, children will be helped to understand what plants need to grow—sunshine, water, air, and soil rich with nutrients.

Getting Ready to Plant

Leaf lettuce and radishes both grow quickly and can be grown in containers indoors or out. In six to eight weeks, you'll have salad ingredients to sample. Involve children in all phases of planting and caring for the seeds. They might keep a gardening journal with pictures of how the plants change from seeds to foods that we eat.

Obtain fast-growing leaf lettuce and radish seeds, potting soil (available in hardware and gardening stores), and containers that are at least six inches wide. You can use a rectangular window box or, to literally give children a window into their garden, try a large fish tank. Wash the tank in very hot water so that it is sterile before you add the potting soil. The tank is best for short-term gardening projects and works especially well for growing tomatoes, peppers, or beans.



When the lettuce sprouts, normally in four to 10 days, thin seedlings so that the plants are four to six inches apart. Explain to children that you need to do this so that all the plants get enough water and nutrients from the soil.

- Start picking the lettuce as soon as you have enough leaves for a salad. Pick only the outer leaves so that the plant will continue producing.
- Explain that since radishes grow under the ground, you need to pull them up to see if they are ready to eat. Test the first plant in about a month. Radishes are ready when they are about one inch across.

Growing Leaf Lettuce and Radishes:

- Follow the specific planting and care instructions on the seed packets.
- When you see the first radish sprouts, usually in three to 10 days, pull out seedlings so that the remaining plants are one or two inches apart.

