Microgreens, Shoots and Sprouts… oh my!

A closer look at these tiny but nutrient-dense greens.
Microgreens
Microgreens

- Microgreens – the tender shoot of a vegetable or herb plant picked just after the first set of TRUE leaves have developed. Usually 1-2” high. Only the stem and leaves are eaten.

Seed leaves or *cotyledons*

First set of true leaves
Microgreens

- Can be any leaf crop, many vegetables, mostly in the brassica family (broccoli, kale, radish) or herbs
- Require a significant source of light, either a very bright windowsill or grow lights (fluorescent or LED) in order to grow properly.
- Most take between 2-4 weeks to mature.
- Flavor is more like the mature vegetable.
- Contain between 4-40x the amount of nutrients than found in their mature counterparts!
Shoots

Pea shoots

Sunflower shoots

Buckwheat shoots

Nasturtium shoots

Popcorn shoots
Shoots

- Shoots are usually referring to pea shoots but can also be French lentils, sunflower, buckwheat, nasturtium or popcorn.
- It includes the stem and side branches of tiny leaves. Plants grown as shoots don’t produce a seed leaf and often grow to be up to 6” tall before ready to harvest.
- Grow best with supplemental light but can be grown in only bright, natural light.
- Ready for harvest in 7-14 days. Eat the stem and leaves.
- Can regrow after the first cutting, although each successive cutting is smaller than the one prior.
Sprouts

Alfalfa sprouts

Chickpea, lentil and mung bean sprouts

Red amaranth sprouts
Sprouts

- Can be grown in water or in soil
- Ready in about 5-10 days by either method
- Requires very little equipment and very easy to grow!

**Water-sown sprouts**
- Ready in about 7 days
- Requires only seeds, jars and screen
- Must be rinsed and drained 2-3x daily
- Seed hulls difficult to remove
- Space
- Seed, root, stem and seed leaves are eaten

**Soil Sprouts**
- Ready in 7-12 days
- Requires containers and soil
- Less watering
- No removing hulls
- Can be grown in a dedicated window or sunny area
- Stems and leaves are eaten.
- Fool-proof!
## What can you grow?

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<tr>
<td><strong>Alfalfa</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Clover</strong></td>
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Microgreens (and shoots?)
– University of Maryland College of Agriculture (2012)
  \textit{4-40x the amount of Vitamin C, E, K and beta carotene!}

Sprouts
– Significant source of protein and dietary fiber, vitamins and minerals (iron and zinc)
– Rich source of enzymes, important for various metabolic processes such as digestion

Highest concentration of nutrients if consumed within 1 week of sprouting! \textit{Remember: always eat fresh, don’t cook!}
Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you plant.

—Robert Louis Stevenson

Thank you and happy seeding!