

Growing Fresh Greens *in the winter*



I have the hardest time eating salad in the winter because I crave warm things, so since I'm a believer in eating your greens everyday, I try to incorporate them into my meals in warm ways.

I love putting hardy greens like kale, swiss chard and collard greens into soups and I've noticed if I chop them small enough, my kids will eat them because they think they're seasonings, not greens! I throw them in at the very end, when I've turned off the heat and the soup has just stopped boiling. I put the lid on and they steam down into nice soft vegetables as soon as I'm ready to serve.

Another thing I adore is sauteeing greens in olive oil, and/or a little organic butter and garlic. Be sure to salt them *after* cooking since they shrink so much. I usually salt and pepper and give a drizzle of lemon right before I eat or serve them. This year I'm

most excited about growing greens indoors in pots. It's really easy. Many health food stores and garden stores still have seeds for purchase during the winter. You can also find seeds online. rareseeds.com is my favorite.

Here's how to grow greens in winter:

1. Grab some hardy greens seeds like Mizuna Mustard, Red Swiss Chard, Collards or Lacinato Kale and some bagged soil and compost.
2. Gather up some old pots or big cans and prepare them by mixing your compost and soil together in a 1:2 ratio and then filling the containers. If the containers don't have drainage holes, add some pebbles to the bottom of the pot before adding the soil. Greens are hardy and can grow in slightly acidic or alkaline soil so you can also use dirt from your backyard if your ground isn't frozen, but it will compact quickly and won't allow for good drainage if you don't mix it with something lighter like a bagged or homemade compost.
3. Once your containers are filled, plant your seeds following the instructions on the seed packets. Since most homes are very dry in the winter, it's necessary to keep your seed bed very wet until you start seeing sprouts.

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4. Once you have established sprouts, back off on your watering little by little until you are only watering when the surface becomes dry. This will cause your plants to grow stronger roots.
5. You should have usable greens in about 3 weeks. Use the leaves in soups, stir fries, sandwiches, pastas and more!

Happy winter gardening!

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