



For year-round fresh leaves, windowsill growing can be done all year round or outdoors May-September.

Some varieties take only 3 weeks until harvest.

What you will need:

- **Packets of seed:** Leaf salad mix, radish, rocket, pea shoots, cress and basil are all speedy growers
- **Plastic seed tray/container** A plastic tomato or mushroom box, approx. 2.5 cm deep is fine
- **Compost** Good quality compost preferably labelled 'for seeds and young plants'
- **Drip tray** To place seed tray onto
- **Labels and marker pen**



Step 1 Fill container to top with soil and level

Step 1 Break up any lumpy bits of compost and fill the container level to the top.

Using another container of the same size, press down on top of the compost to lightly level it off and squeeze any big air pockets out of it.



Some quick crops

Water the compost thoroughly but don't drench it.



Speedy salad

Step 2 Spread the seed as evenly as you can across the container. Read the seed packet to find out how many seeds there are - you might want to sow some now, and another batch later.

Some seeds are tiny. To make them easier to work with, mix the seed with some fine sand. This helps you see and pick up the seeds, sprinkle them more evenly over the compost surface and see where you have sprinkled!

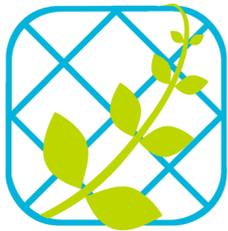


Step 2 Add sand to small seeds



Step 3 Cover with compost/vermiculite

Step 3 Cover the seed with a layer of compost approximately the depth of the seed itself. Or cover with a layer of Vermiculite. This very lightweight, highly fired clay product does the same as the compost. It provides an insulation layer to grow through, but it also prevents the compost drying out too much, especially useful if you cannot water over a weekend.



Step 4 Labelling

Write today's date, the seed name and the sower's name (if appropriate) onto a plant label and stick securely into a corner of the seed tray.

Give tray another light water and then water daily if required. Compost should be as damp as crumble mix before it is baked in the oven!



Germination Information

Depending on the time of year, some seeds will germinate (sprout out of their seed shells) within 7 days. Radish sometimes germinate in two days.

The first two leaves to appear are called the seed leaves. Once the seedlings (young plants growing from the seed) have produced four to six true leaves, it's time to pot them into a bigger container to allow them the space and nutrients to develop.

Step 5 'Potting on' seedlings

Using a spoon, carefully scoop a group of seedlings out of their original container and using a pencil or dibber, gently tease the roots apart.

It's important to hold the seedlings by a leaf and not by the stem. If the stem is bruised or damaged, the plant will die. If a leaf is damaged, it's not such a huge loss - it will soon make more leaves.



Step 5 'Potting on' materials



Scoop seedlings out of the seed tray



Step 6 Use pen/dibber to make holes
Picture caption

Step 6 Fill the 'potting on' pot with compost and level off, water as before. The picture depicts a 9cm square pot (approx. size of a kitchen mug).

Using a pencil or dibber, poke 5 holes into the pot and holding the seedling by a leaf, gently lower it, root first into the hole. Using your fingers, gently press the compost around the neck of the seedlings to hold it firmly in place in the compost. Repeat for the remaining 4 holes. Top up compost level to the watering line if required.

Step 7 Label these individual pots with date and crop names again. Water regularly to ensure strong, regular growth.

Step 8 Harvesting. Some salad leaves and pea shoots are ready to harvest 3 weeks after sowing. Up to three harvests can be taken from one plant by regularly snipping off the leaves you need and letting shoots regrow.

Radish can be ready to eat after approx. 6 weeks—make sure and harvest them when they are young as they can go woody quickly. They're soooo tasty.