Yoderbilt
EST GREENHOUSES 2011

Grow Mixed Lettuce

THIS FALL & WINTER



Did you know that most of the lettuce in the United States is grown, cut, cleaned, packaged and transported from only two states: California and Arizona? That takes a lot of time to get from harvest to your table. Lettuce is such an easy and inexpensive crop to grow that it makes more sense to harvest just steps away from your home instead of many states away for freshness and nutritional impact.

Because fall is here, there is no better time to take full advantage of your Yoderbilt Greenhouse to grow fresh and delicious mixed lettuce. You can easily enjoy the taste of crisp, homegrown greens even during the colder months. In this newsletter, we'll guide you through the ease and benefits of growing mixed lettuce in your Yoderbilt Greenhouse, including the importance of successive planting.

Here are just three of the many reasons to consider growing this crop yourself:

1 **Harvest from Fall through Spring**

The controlled environment of your Yoderbilt Greenhouse allows you to grow an abundance of lettuce throughout the fall and winter, providing a continuous supply of fresh greens. We will discuss the importance of successive planting below.

2 **Better Taste and Nutrition**

Homegrown lettuce is not only tastier but also more nutritious than store-bought alternatives, especially when considering how long it takes to get our lettuce from harvest to your kitchen. The nutritional value of lettuce begins to decline quickly after harvest. Within just hours to days, the freshness and nutrient content can diminish greatly.

3 **Cost Savings**

With the rising prices of fresh produce and frequent recalls, growing your own lettuce can help save money on your grocery bills. We were able to fully supply my family's greens last fall through winter with little effort. This year, we are expanding how much we are growing to be able to share with family and friends.



STEPS TO GROW MIXED LETTUCE





Choose the Right Varieties

Although we grow several different lettuce varieties, we love growing "Mesclun" lettuces which is what we're featuring today. Mesclun simply means "mixture" creating such a diversity of texture and color. You will harvest this when it's young, as it is perfect for a wide array of culinary dishes. Be certain to purchase seeds from a trusted supplier. Some of our favorite lettuce mix seeds include Gourmet Baby Greens Mesclun Lettuce, Chef's Medley Mesclun, Chef's Choice Mesclun, Market Day Mesclun and Farmer's Market Blend Mesclun. It feels like we're enjoying a salad from a 5-star restaurant every day in the comfort of our home. We'll be sharing our favorite salad recipe soon on social media; be sure to follow us there!

Prepare Your Soil

Ensure your greenhouse soil is well-draining and rich in organic matter. We are currently using Organic Bacto Premium. We plant ours in "raised beds" in the greenhouse, along with several galvanized tubs. Make sure your containers have holes for drainage. Ours did not, so we drilled some in.

Temperature & Lighting

In general, we personally try to keep our greenhouse above 45 degrees throughout the fall and winter. And, on warmer days, we will open our windows and doors, utilize our exhaust fan and auto vent along with a floor fan to cool it down. We have never used supplemental lighting for any of our lettuces.

**We want to note that our shade cloth is still on our greenhouse from summer, and we need to remove it. Once we do, and the light is less filtered, the red lettuce will pick up more of that pigmented hue than how it is currently photographed.*

Planting

Follow your package planting instructions as far as depth and spacing. Personally, for the Mesclun lettuce seeds, I sprinkle on top of my moistened soil, lightly press ensuring they come in good contact with the soil, and then lightly cover with fine vermiculite. I have never had an issue with germination.

Watering

We will mist water on top of the vermiculite. Then, we keep the soil consistently moist but not waterlogged.

Fertilize

You can apply fertilizer once the seedlings are established with true leaf sets. It is recommended to apply a balanced, slow-release fertilizer or a liquid fertilizer every 2-4 weeks, depending on the variety and growth stage. Read your specific seed packet for recommendations.

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SUCCESSIVE PLANTING

Most of our lettuce is cut and come again. However, another key to enjoying a steady supply of lettuce is successive planting. **Here's how it works:**

Plan Your Schedule

Determine the average time it takes for your chosen lettuce varieties to mature (usually 45-60 days). Plan to plant a new batch every 2-4 weeks. We plant so many different varieties, we personally successive plant every 3-4 weeks. You can find the schedule that works best for you.

Stagger Planting

As one batch of lettuce approaches maturity, start another batch. This way, you'll have a continuous harvest. You can change up your varieties in this manner too.

Monitor & Harvest Regularly

Keep an eye on your lettuce for signs of maturity. Harvest the outer leaves first, allowing the inner leaves to continue growing.

Growing mixed lettuce in your Yoderbilt Greenhouse is a rewarding and sustainable way to enjoy fresh greens right outside your door. With proper care, attention to successive planting, and the right variety selection, you can savor the taste of your homegrown lettuce throughout the cooler seasons.

Happy growing, and here's to fall and winter filled with delicious salads and nutritious greens just steps away from your back door!





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