Micro Greens

Micro Greens are certain vegetables and herbs that are harvested when quite young, generally at the first true leaf stage of growth.

Reasons to Grow Micro Greens

Healthy - Microgreens are extremely dense in vital enzymes, minerals, and vitamins. There aren't many foods you could eat that are fresher.
Delicious - Enjoy a dazzling array of new flavors. Plants are at their absolute peak of flavor intensity at the microgreens stage of life.
Different - Your friends and family will be amazed at this new and exciting way to eat. Microgreeens are perfect as a complete salad, additions to traditional salad, on sandwiches, in soups, as garnishes and much more.
Easy & Fun - Microgreens can be grown easily and quickly. It is perfect for countertop gardening. Experiment with growing all types of microgreens for an exciting new hobby.

Planning

In order to get started growing micro greens you will need some supplies: Sterile soil mix, tray, domed lid and a sheltered growing area. A heat mat and lighting may be needed for "off-season" production. Seed selection will be an important step also. Start with a few varieties or mixes to see what flavors you like best. It may take some trialing to know how much and when to seed (for example radish greens will grow much faster than beets and have a spicy flavor). Some commonly grown micro greens are: Alfalfa, Basil, Beets, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Chives, Cilantro, Dill, Kale, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Mint, Mustard, Nasturtium, Onion, Peas, Radish, Spinach, Swiss Chard, Sunflower, and Wheat.

Sowing

Seeds are often sown into standard 10x20 flats with inserts or rowed seed flats containing 1-2" of light, sterile, soilless mix. When getting ready to sow be aware of seed size as this will determine the best method of planting. Seeding densities should be thick enough to cover the flat but not to a point of inhibiting air flow. Both small and large seeds should be sown thickly and gently tamped into the soil. Approximately 6-8 seeds per square inch is a good rule of thumb. Small seeds may be covered with

paper towels or finely sifted vermiculite but some prefer to leave uncovered. Larger seeds should be lightly covered with soil or vermiculite. Once the flats are sown, gently water to avoid washing away the seed. A slow, steady mist will help reduce this mistake. Cover the flats with a plastic domed-lid to retain humidity and aid in germination. Be careful to remove the lid or ventilate during sunny, warm conditions. If using towels to cover , they can gently be removed in just a few days.

Production

Provide sufficient ventilation to prevent disease and mold issues. The flats of micro greens need to be kept moist but not overly wet. You can utilize bottom watering to minimize soil splashing, which also produces a much cleaner finished product. Because of the one-cut nature of this crop, succession planting is necessary to produce a steady supply of micro greens. Growing micro greens indoors in the off-season will require some extra effort. A grow light will be needed and possibly a heat mat. Be aware of light duration, intensity, and distance from the crop. If the light source is located too far from the crop, stretching or "leginess" may occur. Fertilizing isn't necessary with micro greens normally but you may need to apply a liquid fertilizer if yellowing occurs on slower crops.

Harvest

Micro greens are harvested usually with one set of true leaves, with the cotyledons still attached, generally between 1-2" tall. Each variety's appearance and taste will give you an indication of its optimal harvest period. Some trialing will be helpful. Micro greens are tender and need to be handled with care. Harvest by cutting handfuls with scissors or cut entire flats with an electric knife. Refrigeration is necessary to maintain freshness and quality after harvest.