

# A speedy 'seeds to supper' microgreens project



## Introduction

If you want to create a 'seeds to supper' experience for your pupils, but you are short on time and space, this growing project can be done in a couple of weeks and provides not only an end product which can be eaten, but plenty of opportunities to link to the curriculum. Follow the steps and our recommendations for the simplest version - or use our extension ideas to build into a fuller project.

Microgreens are where you eat the young leaves of a plant, rather than letting the plant grow to maturity. Cress is a classic example!

## You will need:

- **Container / plant pot.** A milk bottle cut in half, strawberry or tomato tray or other container that can hold soil will be suitable. Be sure there are a few holes at the bottom to allow for drainage.
- **Peat free compost.** Available from your local garden centre. Alternatively, use a scoop of soil from an outdoor area - ensure you check for debris, rubbish or other potentially hazardous materials.
- **Small watering can.** If you haven't got a watering can, use an old plastic milk bottle with holes pricked in the lid.
- **Seeds.** Read the instructions overleaf to find out which plants will produce a speedy crop!
- **Warm, bright windowsill.** Ideally southfacing. Place your pots where your pupils can watch them grow.

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## Activity

**1. Choose your seeds.** Our top crop recommendation is using pea seeds (either a standard growing pack, or dried cooking peas from the supermarket).

**Extension** - Ask your pupils to research which plants can be grown as microgreens - they should discover options like herbs such as basil and coriander, vegetables such as kale and radish, and many more! Let them choose some different types and grow a selection to compare. Ask them to think about the part of the plant you would normally expect to eat.

**2. Select a container.** Recycle a plastic tray, (i.e. strawberry or tomato) which often have holes at the bottom making them the perfect growing tray (or buy similar).

**Extension** - Set your pupils a challenge to design a container using recycled objects - this could include “self watering” wicking planters, or creating a mini greenhouse (as below using clingfilm or a bag).

**3. Fill your container with compost and water thoroughly.**

**4. Sprinkle your seeds generously on top of the compost.** Cover with a thin layer of compost and water lightly. Cover the tray with clingfilm or put in a reusable ziplock bag. Place on a sunny windowsill in the classroom.

**Extension** - Using seed packets or online research, ask your pupils to find out how they would plant the seeds differently if they were growing a mature plant. Why do they think this is? What predictions would they make if they left the seeds to grow longer than 2-3 weeks for this project?

**5. Observe.** Depending on conditions, you can expect your shoots to emerge around day 4-5. Remove the cover at this point.

**6. Check your seeds daily, ensuring the compost is moist but not soaked.** Observe the plants as they change, what do the first leaves look like? Are the second different? Are the conditions affecting how they grow (eg towards the light, more quickly or slowly than expected).

**7. Harvest.** After 2-3 weeks, your microgreens should be ready to harvest. Use scissors to delicately cut the stem at the base of the plant.

**8. Taste.** Encourage your pupils to use all of their senses to explore what they’ve grown. Describe how they look and smell before tasting - then ask for descriptive words for the flavour and texture. Is it what they expected? Does a pea shoot taste like peas?

**Extension** - In between planting and harvesting your seeds, get your pupils to research and design a simple recipe to use their greens - eg an open sandwich with one other ingredient (eg cream cheese, tomato, mashed avocado) or create something as a class such as a soup or cous cous salad and use your greens as topping.

**A further extension.** After doing this activity in class, could you send the children away with materials to repeat the activity at home?