



School Gardening
Resources

PRIMARY LEVEL

BORD BIA
IRISH FOOD BOARD

Growing Lettuce in School





Time of Year	March, April, May
Aim	To demonstrate to children how to grow and harvest lettuce.
Resources Needed	Organic seeds of butterhead, cos, crisphead (three headed varieties), loose-leaf varieties, trowels, ruler, modular trays, peat-free compost, watering can, labels.
Cross Curriculum Relevance	SESE: Living things, exploring / research, recording, observing Maths: Measuring, recording, active learning Literacy: New words, writing, spelling Art: Making signs, photos Informal Curriculum: Food Dudes, Healthy Eating, Discover Primary Science



Sowing

Sow the seeds in modular trays of peat-free compost indoors on a windowsill in March following instructions on the packet. Sow one seed per module for headed lettuces; for cut and come again lettuces, sow about 5 seeds per module. Label each tray. Do not cover the seeds as lettuces need light to germinate. Lettuces require cool conditions to germinate. 18°C is an ideal temperature. They will not germinate in temperatures above 25°C.



Aftercare

Harden off the seedlings before planting outside into window boxes or raised beds according to the recommended spaces on the packet. (The soil in the bed should be enriched with well-rotted manure or garden compost in autumn). Plant with the seed leaves just above ground level but not touching the soil. Keep compost moist especially if the weather is warm. Watch out for slug and snail damage and use organic deterrents.



Harvesting

Loose leaf varieties such as 'Lolla Rossa' and 'Salad Bowl' can be harvested by cutting the leaves about 5cm above the ground. New leaves will emerge. Lettuces that grow into heads such as 'Little Gem' (Cos lettuce) and 'Tom Thumb' (Butterhead lettuce) can be harvested when a good heart is visible. Cut the stems near the base.

Health and Safety

- ★ Wash hands after sowing and planting.
- ★ Wash leaves thoroughly before eating.
- ★ Care should be taken when cutting the lettuce leaves.

