



LETTUCE

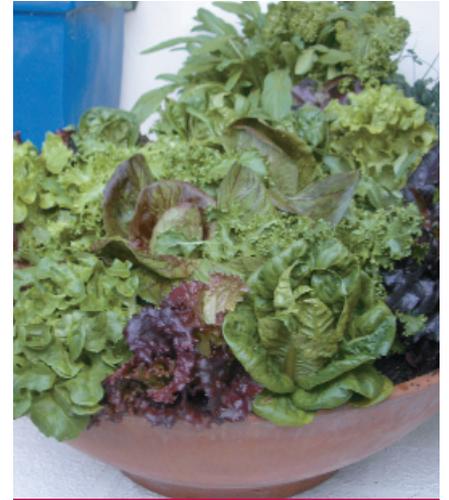
BY ASHLEY SEARLE

Good for planting in Autumn through to Spring

Lettuce has always been an easy salad vegetable to grow, which has made them very popular with the home gardener. Being one of the main ingredients to salads, lettuce can be grown and harvested all year round.

There is a huge range to choose from, with different leaf shapes and colours to add to a bit of pizzazz to your veggie plot. The most used of all lettuce is the Green & Brown Mignonette. They are a small grower, which makes them ideal if space is limited. Their mild flavour makes them great as a sandwich filler.

If you love Caesar Salad then you'll love Cos Lettuce. They are a loose-leaf variety with heaps of taste. For that old fashion crispy lettuce you can't go past Yatesdale (Imperial). The leaves store well and are great for salads. To add a bit of difference to your salads try Lollo Bionda, it is a tightly frilled loose-leaf lettuce, which is great just eaten by itself.



A pot of mixed varieties of lettuce.



PREPARING THE GARDEN BED

Prepare your garden (in the full sun) with lots of manure & compost. **Searles 5 IN 1[®] Plus Organic Plant Food** is ideal to dig into your existing soil, as it contains all the nutrients your lettuce needs to grow bigger heads and have a better taste. Lettuce are surface rooting, so to prevent their roots drying out and to keep them cool, an application of **Searles[®] Mulch Plus** is recommended.

PLANTING

Seeds of many varieties are available in the **Searles[®] Seed Range** and can be sown directly into your garden. Lettuce seedlings are also available. Plant seeds or seedlings in rows about 25 - 30cm apart.





POTS OF LETTUCE

If you don't have a space in your garden to start a vegie plot then don't despair, as lettuce will grow well in pots. Plant them into **Searles® Herb & Vegetable Potting Mix**, which is specially designed for growing herbs and vegetables in pots.



WATER AND FERTILISING

It is best to grow lettuce very fast for tender tasty leaves. Generous feeding with **Searles Flourish® Soluble fertiliser** or **Searles Fish & Kelp Plus** will help you produce a fantastic crop. Lettuce leaves are full of water so they love a regular deep thorough watering. Give them a good watering every couple of days.

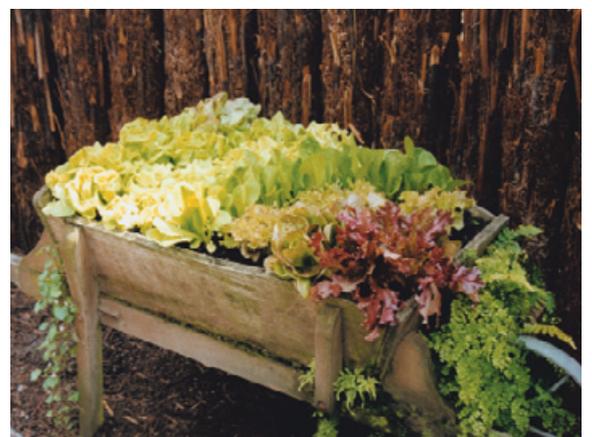


Snails love to eat your lettuce so protect your crop with a snail & slug killer (pellets). A ring of sawdust around your seedlings will also keep them away because it sticks to them and they don't cross over the line to feed.

Some gardeners will plant lettuce at 2 - 3 week intervals to stagger the amount they produce so they have a steady flow over a prolonged period of time.

When plants are at a good size, pick the leaves, as you need them. It is best to pick them while they are young and not tart or sour. When the leaves become old, they will lose their sweetness.

Growing lettuce at home is wonderful and highly successful. They are an easy to grow crop that will produce just about all year round. If you have children that are just starting to learn how to garden, then lettuce is great crop for them to begin on, as they are fast growing and taste great.



Find creative ways of planting your vegetable in pots, like these lettuces planted in a wooden wheelbarrow.