
UNH Cooperative Extension Info Line Question of the Week

Growing Sprouts

Q. Is it easy to grow sprouts?

A. If you decide to grow your own sprouts all that is needed is a wide-mouth quart jar, a piece of cheese cloth or an old nylon stocking, and a rubber band. Mung beans, lentils, soy and alfalfa are easier to grow than other beans or grains. Seeds should be purchased from a grocery or specialty store. Seeds that come from seed companies are often treated with insecticide/fungicide mixtures and should not be used for sprouting.



To start your seeds all you need is water and warmth for germination. Pick only the whole seeds. Cracked or broken seeds will not sprout, but ferment, causing decay of the remaining seeds.

Measure one-third cup seeds, rinse and soak in two cups tepid water for 8 to 10 hours or overnight in a quart jar. The next day drain the jar, rinse the seeds thoroughly in tepid water, drain well, cover with a dampened cloth or nylon stocking and secure with a rubber band. Lay the mouth of the jar down at a slight angle (to drain excess water) in a bowl. The sprouting jar must be large enough for growth and air circulation. Keep the jar in a dark cabinet with an even temperature. Leave the door ajar for air circulation.

Continue to rinse the seeds twice a day. Be sure to drain excess water well each time. Mung, lentil and alfalfa sprouts are ready in three days, and soy in four days. When the sprouts have reached the desired length, place the jar in direct light or artificial light for four to five hours for greening. Chlorophyll formed during the greening process improves eye appeal, flavor and nutritional value somewhat. Place the greened sprouts in cold water briefly to disentangle them for easier use. Drain well for one to two hours before storing in the refrigerator.

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension Education Center's Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or e-mail us at answers@unh.edu