



SPINACH GROWING GUIDE

Spinach is one of the healthiest green vegetables you can grow. It's packed with iron, Vitamin A, Vitamin K, various B-complex vitamins, and a variety of other nutrients, all in a leaf that tastes delicious in sandwiches, salads, and as a cooked side. Spinach loves cool weather, making it a garden favorite for early spring and late fall.

WHEN TO SOW	SUN / PART SHADE	SEED SPACING	ROW SPACING	PLANTING DEPTH	SPACING AFTER THINNING	DAYS TO GERMINATE	DAYS TO MATURITY
Early spring, or fall before ground freezes	Part shade	1 inch	12-18 inches	¼ inch	3 inches	7-21	43-60

Soil and Fertilizing

It's best to have your soil tested before planting, so you know what nutrients and pH adjustments may be needed to support your crop. For a thorough soil test, consult your local county extension office.

Spinach favors loamy, fertile soil with a loose texture and a high percentage of organic matter (compost works well), with a pH of 5.5-6.8.

Planting

Air temperatures of 50-70° F, with soil temperatures between 35 and 45° F, make the best conditions for spinach. If the temperature rises above 80° or the days get longer than 14 hours, spinach will bolt (flower) and become bitter.

Sow spinach seeds directly in the garden, as spinach doesn't take to transplanting. You can still get an early start in spring, however, by planting up to eight weeks before the last frost. Late September to mid-October are the best times for fall sowing, possibly even a bit later in the deep South.

A place where the plants are shaded during the hottest part of the day is ideal. If you grow spinach in containers, be sure to move them into the shade as necessary.

When you thin your spinach seedlings, keep the culled plants. The tender leaves are tasty in salads.

Watering

Give your plants about one inch of water once a week if you don't get enough rain. Be sure not to overwater, or you may run into problems with disease. A layer of mulch around the plants will help them conserve water.

Harvesting / Storage

Mature spinach presents a rosette of 5-6 leaves. Unlike plants like collards or turnips, however, the leaves will not grow back when you pick them, so harvest the entire plant at once.

For soil testing or other questions specific to your growing climate, please contact your local county extension agent.

Visit <http://www.almanac.com/content/cooperative-extension-services> to find the office nearest you.