



# MIXED GREENS

## IN THE CLASSROOM

New Hampshire Harvest of the Month provides resources for the cafeteria, classroom, and community to promote the use of local, seasonal foods.

[www.nhharvestofthemonth.org](http://www.nhharvestofthemonth.org)

### History

There are a wide variety of salad greens available in Vermont, spanning across several plant families, each bearing a unique history.

- **Arugula** is a spicy, mustard-like plant that is currently grown as a “specialty green” in Vermont. It is a member of one of the dominant families in our food system: *Brassicaceae*; broccoli, kale and rutabagas are also in this family. It is native to Europe and western Asia and was introduced to the United States by the colonists.
- **Lettuce** is a member of the family *Asteraceae*, along with artichokes, marigolds and sunflowers. It is native to the eastern Mediterranean and boasts over 100 varieties. Thousands of years ago, it was most likely grown for the oil its seeds produced. Christopher Columbus introduced varieties of lettuce to North America during his second voyage in 1493.
- **Spinach** is a member of the family *Amaranthaceae*, along with beets, chard and quinoa. It is native to Persia and was not introduced to the Greeks and Romans until the Moors brought it to Spain in the 11th century.

### Reading Corner

#### Elementary School

- » *From Seed to Plant*, by Gail Gibbons
- » *Oliver’s Vegetables*, by Vivian French
- » *Plants on My Plate*, by Cathy Smith
- » *The Tiny Seed*, by Eric Carle

#### Middle School

- » *Green Power: Leaf and Flower Vegetables*, by Meredith Sayles Hughes
- » *Sell What You Sow*, by Erica Gibson

### VARIETIES OF GREENS:



Arugula



Bibb & Butterhead Lettuce



Green Romaine Lettuce



Red Oak Leaf Lettuce



Pac Choy



Pea Shoots



Sunflower Shoots



Spinach

### Fun Facts

- Arugula is nicknamed “salad rocket”, which is derived from the Latin word *eruca*, meaning caterpillar—this is most likely referring to the hairy stems some varieties possess.
- The word lettuce is derived from the Latin word *lactuca*, which stems from *lactus*, meaning “milk”; this name was designated because of the white resin the stems secrete when they’re cut.
- In China, lettuce represents good luck.
- During the Middle Ages, spinach leaves were sold in the form of round balls, called *espinoche*.
- Spinach contains more iron by weight than a hamburger.

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## Benefits

- **Arugula:** An excellent source of vitamin A, B9 (folic acid) and C and the minerals magnesium, manganese and calcium. It is a very good source of vitamin B2 (riboflavin) and the minerals copper, iron and potassium.
- **Lettuce:** Most varieties are rich in B9 (folic acid) and the mineral potassium. Romaine lettuce is typically viewed as the most nutrient-rich. It is an excellent source of vitamin A, B1 (thiamine), B2 (riboflavin), B9 (folic acid) and C, as well as the minerals chromium and manganese.
- **Spinach:** An excellent source of vitamin A, B9 (folic acid) and C. It is a very good source of vitamin B2 (riboflavin) and the minerals iron, magnesium and manganese.



## CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

### Art | Leaf Prints

#### Supplies needed:

Varieties of greens, blank paper, paint, paintbrushes, paint dishes (one for each color) and a drop cloth.

#### Directions:

1. Review varieties of greens with the students, using the list provided in this resource.
2. Students will transfer the vein pattern and shape of the leaves by painting on the backside and pressing it down firmly on their paper.
3. Experiment with creating patterns (like wallpaper or fabric).
4. For an extra challenge, ask the students to label the types of greens on their paper.

### Science | Greens Under the Microscope

#### Supplies needed:

Varieties of greens, microscopes, a handout that allows for drawings and written observations.

#### Directions:

1. Talk about the components of plant cells—this is a good opportunity to compare and contrast plant cells with animal cells.
2. Have students observe other aspects of the greens: color, shape, size, scent and taste.

### Homeroom | Grow Greens in the Classroom

#### Supplies needed:

Seed packets (greens, specialty greens, shoots—refer to the list in this resource for ideas), containers with drain holes, potting mix, grow lights/south-facing window/school garden and journals/handout.

#### Directions:

1. Talk with the students about the necessary components of plant growth: sunlight, water, air (carbon dioxide) and nutrients. Be sure to note that temperature/time of year and the planting directions on the seed packet are important.
2. This is a good opportunity to talk about process of photosynthesis. Key words: carbon dioxide, chlorophyll, phototrophic, sugar, sunlight and water.
3. Have the students graph the growth of the greens over time. You can also have them sketch the life stages of a plant.
4. Have taste tests in your classroom!

Source: GMFTS

## HARVEST LESSONS

For extended, standards-based lesson plans, visit:  
[www.nhharvestofthemoth.org/harvest-lessons](http://www.nhharvestofthemoth.org/harvest-lessons)