

Cleveland Seed Bank's

guide to growing

SPINACH

Native to what we now call Central and Western Asia, spinach was domesticated over 2,000 years ago in what we now know as Iran. It moved east when the King of Nepal sent spinach as a gift to China in the 7th Century.

Originally from the Persian term 'aspānāk', the English word dates to the late 14th century from the French-derived 'épinache'.

Latin name: *Spinacia oleracea* (Classic) & *Brassica rapa v. narinosa* (Tatsoi)

Sun: Full

Life cycle: Annual

Direct sow or transplant: Both

Height: 6-12"

Container Friendly: Yes



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SOW



Direct sow/transplant: Direct sow or transplant (only if you have ample light indoors and enough heat for germination to occur).

Common mistakes: Avoid sowing classic spinach in the heat of summer. Thin often to avoid overcrowding.

Days to germination: ~ 7-14 days.

When: Spinach is cold-tolerant and can be sown as soon as the soil can be worked. In NE OH, this is typically around mid-March

Seedling Depth: ~ 1/4 inch deep.

Spacing: Sow seeds every 1 inch then thin to every 3-6 inches as spinach leaves begin to overlap. Eat your thinnings!

Succession sowing: Spinach is often succession sown every 2-4 weeks, depending on desired harvest size.

Companion planting: Plant with slow-growing crops such as peas, broccoli, or garlic. Make sure spinach plants have access to the sun as the companion plants grow.

GROW

Soil: Spinach doesn't like overly wet soil, ensure proper drainage with a pH between 6.5-7.5.

Trellising Spinach will not require stake or trellis support.



Containers: Quick-growing and perfect for harvesting at any stage of maturity, spinach can thrive in 5+ gallon containers. Sow or transplant seedlings in a circular pattern, leaving 4-6" between plants. Harvest the outermost leaves as often as desired or harvest the whole plant at once.

Pests: For classic spinach, watch out for leaf miners. For Tatsoi spinach, look for evidence of Imported Cabbageworms and flea beetles.

Diseases: Both classic and Tatsoi spinach are rarely susceptible to diseases around our NE OH area, however classic spinach is known to be affected by fusarium wilt and downy mildew.

HARVEST



Harvest any variety when leaves are young for 'baby' spinach.

Which stage of maturity do you enjoy most?

Spinach: Both classic and Tatsoi spinach can be harvested at any stage of maturity, from microgreens to full-sized leaves. Harvest the outermost leaves first, allowing new leaves to grow and mature from the center. Or, harvest the whole plant by cutting 1" above the root.

Bolting: During the heat of summer, watch for bolting spinach, indicated by a flowering seed stalk. Since bolting can alter the taste, it is best to harvest the whole plant once you notice signs of bolt.



SAVE

Spinach cross-pollinates by wind (classic) and insects (Tatsoi). Isolation is needed to prevent hybrids.



1 Spinach plants are either male or female. First identify female plants by looking at the base of the leaves for round green husks (male plants will have yellow flowers). These husks are seeds maturing.



2 Wait for the majority of seeds on the female plant to turn from green to tan, maturing from the bottom up, then harvest the whole plant.

3 Strip off the seeds and let them drop into a container. Further separate seeds from the plant material by using a screen.

4 Thoroughly dry seed. Seed is viable for 3 years.



Preserving the harvest: Spinach is commonly enjoyed raw or sauteed, but there are other ways to preserve your harvest too!

Blanch spinach before freezing to preserve flavor and texture. Spinach can also be dehydrated for a quick snack or to grind into a fine powder.

TYPES

Classic spinach: Leaves can be savored at any size. Classic spinach loves cooler temperatures.

Tatsoi spinach: Often referred to as 'Asian spinach,' this variety can be grown both in cooler spring temperatures and during the heat of summer.

Savoy: Also known as 'curly-leaf' spinach, these types have been selected for their wrinkled leaves, looking quite appealing in salads or when used as a garnish.

Smooth: This type has been selected for its flat, smooth leaves; making them easier to clean than more wrinkled varieties.



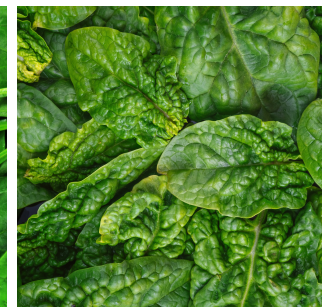
Classic spinach



Tatsoi spinach



Smooth



Savoy