

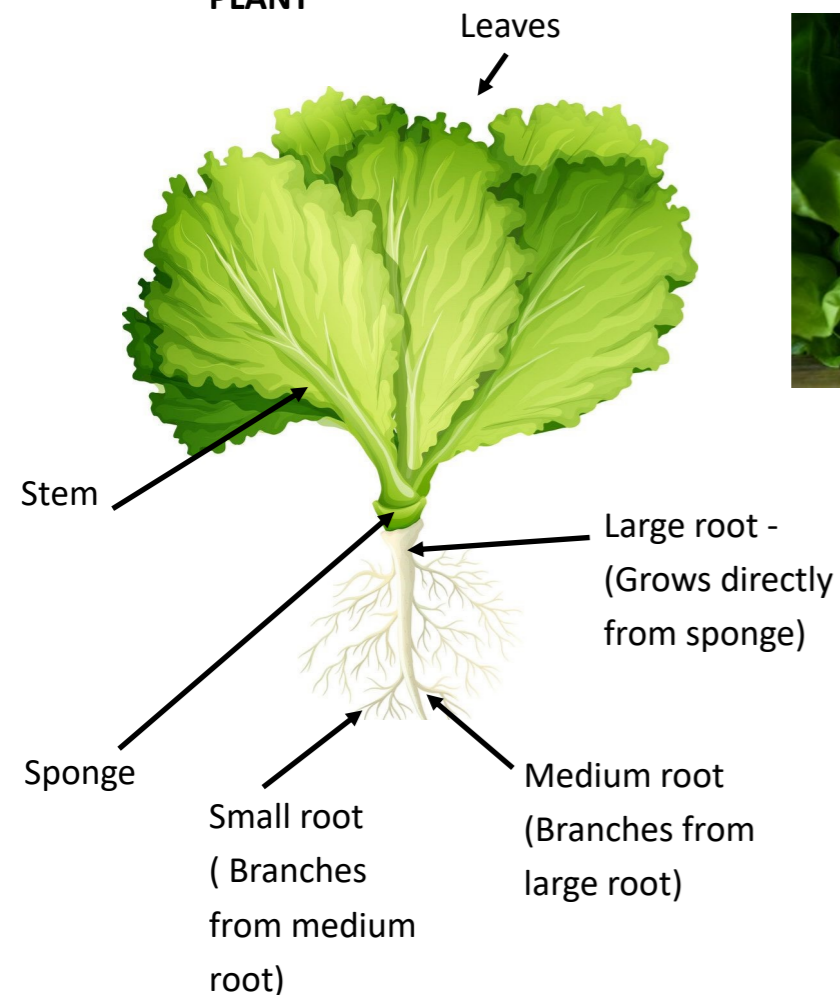


All about Lettuce - (*Lactuca sativa*)



Lettuce, annual leaf vegetable of the aster daisy family (Asteraceae).

PLANT



Inside a lettuce

The vein structure and shape of the leaf can be delicate and complex.



FLOWER



Lettuce flower appears when lettuce has **bolted** - causes the flavour of lettuce to turn bitter making them inedible.

What are Lettuce?

Lettuce is an annual plant. It is most often grown as a leaf vegetable, but sometimes for its stem and seeds. Lettuce is used for salads, although it is also seen in other kinds of food, such as soups, sandwiches and wraps; it can also be grilled.

Lettuces aren't just plain green floppy green vegetables any more. They are red and yellow and spotted and bitter and sweet and curled and smooth. They are also fast growing and versatile. Grow them in pots and hanging baskets, use them to fill an empty spot as slower growing crops develop or grow them as a border in an ornamental garden bed.

There are three different categories of leafy lettuce wholehead, baby leaf and speciality.

Wholehead as the name implies, refers to plants such as lettuces, where a 'whole head' of produce is grown.

Baby leaf refers to those plants which grow as individual leaves, such as rocket or spinach.

Speciality, sometimes known as continental, is lettuces such as Batavia or Lollo Rosso, which are from European varieties.

Choose the right varieties and you can have lettuce almost all year round. There are so many types of lettuce to choose from – all with different colours, flavours and textures – that salad need never be boring!

There are two main types of lettuce – hearting lettuces have a dense centre, like Iceberg lettuce

while loose-leaf lettuces have open leaves and no heart like lambs lettuce.

You can also grow a variety of salad leaves that can be picked while young and tender.



Check out our Lovely Lettuce facts for children. Learn interesting information.

-  Lettuce shouldn't be stored near apples, bananas, or any other ethylene-emitting fruits. Ethylene causes lettuce to ripen super fast and start to decay rapidly!
-  Lettuce is the second most popular fresh veggie in the US, behind only the potato!
-  Because lettuce is about 95% water, it has to be eaten fresh and cannot be frozen, dried, pickled or canned.
-  There are hieroglyphic records of lettuce being grown over 6000 years ago.
-  Christopher Columbus was the person who introduced lettuce to America during his second voyage to the New World in 1494. It is thought that the Romans introduced it to Britain.
-  Dark green lettuce leaves are more nutritious than light green leaves.
-  Calling lettuce "rabbit food" dates back to the 1930s. 
-  Iceberg lettuce takes about 85 days from sowing to maturity
-  China is the world's largest producer of lettuce
-  British lettuce are in season from May to December
-  Lettuce is loaded with vitamin A and vitamin K but is low in calories

When shopping what should we look for when selecting our lettuce and how to keep it in 'tip top' condition at home.

lettuce can be purchased from your nearest farmer's market or supermarket store

They say we purchase our food with our eyes so: When looking at the lettuce selection in front of you, side-step bunches that are limp, wilting, or have spots or holes on them.

Make sure that the lettuce leaves are crisp, tender, and brightly coloured. Lettuce can be best enjoyed if it is fresh and crisp.

Where possible buy whole heads of lettuce over loose lettuce leaves, as they are fresher and more nutritious.

Always check the sell buy date of bagged lettuce

When you get it home, because lettuce is a delicate vegetable, correct storage is important for keeping it fresher for longer.

Read the information labels on packet lettuce .

The best way to store lettuce is to keep it unwashed in an airtight container or plastic bag and store it in the fridge .

Fresh lettuce purchased from the farm should be checked for insects, keep the roots attached and put in a glass of water with a bag over the leaves and store in the fridge until needed. The salad section of the fridge is the best place for storing lettuce.

