

## COMPANION TO THE SPROUTING GUIDE

By Gemie Martin

Once a seed germinates, it immediately becomes more nutritious. Protein, vitamins, and some minerals increase. A few tablespoons of sprouts can pack as much nutrition or more, as a large serving of the mature plant, and much more than the seed itself. Sprouted grains are generally easier to digest and less likely to affect blood sugar levels. Starch decreases as do certain antinutrients (making the nutrients more available and useable to our bodies).

Not all seeds can be sprouted and safely eaten. If any part of the plant is not safe to eat, the sprout will not be safe to eat either. The best guide to making sure you are sprouting seeds that are safe to be eaten as sprouts, is to look at what is being sold to be sprouted by reputable sources such as sproutpeople.org or trueleafmarket.com. The Sprouting Guide (on the other side) is also a good guide as to what can be safely eaten when sprouted.

To save money, you can often obtain beans and grains to sprout from sources other than those mentioned above. Costco, Whole Foods, Central Market, WinCo, and Sprouts Farmers Market are a few of the places I have found seeds to sprout. Only buy seed products to sprout that are meant to be consumed. If you buy “seed crop,” from a farm supply or nursery, it is meant to be planted and may have been chemically treated. If a seed has been heat treated, or irradiated, it is not likely to sprout. Some grains that have been hulled, will be less likely to sprout. Purchase a small amount for testing.

The Sprouting Guide gives instructions for certain sprouts to be exposed to light to develop Chlorophyll. This should not be direct sunlight. Indirect sunlight or even the light in your kitchen works. Pay attention to the timing of exposing your sprouts to light. Some will become bitter if allowed to green for too long. If there are no leaves, they will not green and do not need to be exposed to light.

The conditions that allow our sprouts to grow and flourish (warm and moist), are also the conditions that allow bacterial growth. To keep your sprout crop clean and pathogen-free, make sure to rinse your seeds well before soaking. If your sprout crop is meant to be eaten raw (without cooking), soak seeds to be sprouted in undiluted vinegar for 15 minutes. Use just enough vinegar to cover the seeds. Stir them around to make sure all seeds are exposed to the vinegar. Rinse well, then cover with four times their amount of clean water (unless you are working with a seed that does not need soaking). I use clean tap water to rinse. Follow the instructions for each seed as to the frequency of rinsing. If you are rinsing your sprouts twice a day, every 12 hours is ideal. If you are rinsing three times a day, try to do it as close to every eight hours as possible. Drain well after each rinse.

When it is time to harvest your crop, I suggest you go through the following regimen: After removing as many hulls as you wish, soak your sprouts, in a solution of up to a 1/5 ratio of food grade hydrogen peroxide (3%) to water (it can be less, just soak then a bit longer). Rinse your sprouts and drain well. Next, soak your crop in a solution of vinegar and water. What the peroxide hasn't killed, the vinegar likely will. I use about the same ratio of vinegar as I did hydrogen peroxide, but you can use more—it's just food you are soaking them in this time. Rinse well in clean tap water and drain well (for up to 12 hours). I do not put my sanitized sprouts back in the container they were sprouted in unless that is the container they were also sanitized in and all parts of it (including the lid) have been sanitized. If I am working with a crop that is to be cooked before being eaten, I eliminate the above sanitizing regimen. As a rule, do not eat sprouts that have become slimy, wilted, or have a bad odor.

After thoroughly draining (and your sprouts are dry to the touch), you can refrigerate most crops (at 40°F or below) for up to two weeks. According to sproutpeople.org, grains like wheat and corn are a cold weather crop and will continue to grow even in the refrigerator (although at a slower rate). Many sprouted grains can be dehydrated and then ground to be flour. They can also be frozen at any stage to be used later. I store my sprouted wheat, and my sprouted, dehydrated then milled flour in the freezer unless I am planning to use it quickly.

### Sources of Information:

<https://sproutpeople.org/growing-sprouts/sprouting-basics/>

<https://www.webmd.com/diet/sprouts-good-for-you#>

<https://onedegreeorganics.com/sprouted-grains-the-benefits-of-sprouting-everything-you-need-to-know/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7587365/>

[https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/produce/guidance/docs/sprouts\\_home\\_July2018\\_final.pdf](https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/produce/guidance/docs/sprouts_home_July2018_final.pdf)

### Sources of Seeds to Sprout:

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

[www.trueleafmarket.com](http://www.trueleafmarket.com)