

# GROW

Learn, Grow, Eat & Go!  
EARLY CHILDHOOD  
Week 3

## Stems & Leaves: Growing Spinach or Lettuce

PILOT DRAFT

**Objectives:** Students will learn what is needed to make a plant grow by planting a container garden with Spinach or leaf lettuce seeds.

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Materials/Prep:** Bag of all purpose potting soil, spinach or leaf lettuce seeds, water in watering can, large pot/container with drainage holes in bottom, trash bag

### Lesson Narrative:

1. We've been talking about stems and leaves this week. I have some seeds in my hand. Raise your hand if you can tell me what seeds can do. (They can grow into a plant.) We are going to plant these seeds and we'll be able to grow a plant with roots and other plant parts.
2. Spread trash bag on ground in front of students and have a container garden, bag of soil, shovel, water in watering can, and carrot seeds.
3. What do you think we are going to do with these supplies? (Plant the seeds and grow a plant.)
4. Ask questions as you fill container with soil. Why do plants need soil? (To hold the roots that are going to grow so the seed can grow into a whole plant.) Have students take turns pressing the soil down in the pot to get it ready for planting. What else do plants need? (water and light)
5. Next, pour the spinach or leaf lettuce seeds into your hand. Have each student, one-by-one take a pinch of a few seeds and drop them into the top of soil. They should push in the seeds just below the surface of the soil. (As a general rule, seeds should be planted at a depth of twice their width.)
6. What do you think will happen to our seed? (It will grow into a plant). What kind of plant? (spinach/lettuce) How do you know? (We are planting spinach/lettuce seeds.) Where should we take this container of planted seeds so they can grow? (Outside to our garden.)
7. Have students help to take the container outside to a garden location and lightly water the soil to make it damp. Review that the spinach/lettuce they will be growing will need soil, water and sunlight to be able to grow.



### Tips for growing leafy greens with your class:

- Place container in a location that gets at least 6-8 hours of sunlight per day.
- Lightly water daily, if needed, to keep soil and seeds damp for the first 2 weeks.
- These are cool season crops which grow best in cooler weather. Look on back of the seed packet to find planting dates for your area contact or your local County Extension office to find what time of year leafy greens can be grown.

### Spinach and Leaf Lettuce:

It takes 1-2 weeks for spinach seeds to germinate. About 2 weeks after seed germinate, thin the seedlings to a spacing of 4 inches apart by clipping them at the base with scissors.

After 6 – 8 weeks of growing, you can begin harvesting. As long as the weather is cool, spinach can continue to grow. For continued growth, do not clip more than 1/3 of the leaves away at a time so that the remaining leaves can continue to absorb light and help the plant grow. Harvest by clipping them at the base of the stem.