

Week 4



Learn with Me at Home Activity: Grow Some Green at Home!

In the last few weeks, our class has learned how to start a small garden and give plants what they need to grow. We also learned that growing nutritious greens like baby spinach is easy and delicious!

Start a “mini-garden” to grow the tasty greens at your home with the help of your child. A new garden can be started in just a few steps:

1. **Get some sun and soil.** Whether it’s a front porch, backyard, or patio area, as long as you have at least 6 hours of sunlight, your spinach garden can thrive.

If your garden will be growing in the ground, try to find a place with dark, crumbly soil. Spinach seeds can also grow well in pots or large containers that are at least 8 inches tall. Fill the container with potting soil and press it firmly down.

2. **Find your season and seeds.** Spinach grows well when it’s not very hot or very cold. Look on the back of the seed packet to find planting dates for your area or contact your local county Extension office to find out what time of year spinach can be grown.

3. **Plant the seeds.** Spinach seeds should be planted just below the surface of the soil and 3 to 4 inches apart. Water the seeds enough to keep the soil damp, and they will germinate in 1 to 2 weeks!

You can begin to harvest the baby spinach leaves when they grow 4 to 5 inches tall. As long as the weather is cool, spinach can continue to grow! For continued growth, do not clip more than one-third of the leaves away at a time to ensure that the remaining leaves can continue to absorb light and help the plant keep growing. Harvest by clipping them at the base of the stem.

Spinach and other leafy greens need fertilizer to grow. Potting soil that already has fertilizer added will fill this need. As you harvest leaves from the plant, additional fertilizer may be needed if you see the plants starting to turn yellow.

Learn at Home Tips:

- Compliment your child’s work of being responsible for taking care of the garden. (Such as: “You did it, all by yourself! You remembered to check on the garden!” or “You were careful to water this seed so gently!”)
- Let your child hear you being enthusiastic about working together and the growth of the garden. (Such as: “I had fun starting the garden with you!” or “I can see the seeds are growing!” or “I can’t wait until we get to taste this yummy spinach!”)

Take pictures of yourself and your child as you start and grow your garden! Share with your teacher, then enjoy eating your plants together! We invite you to share your photo on social media with the hashtag **#growfreshgreen** and **#EarlyChildhoodLGEg**.

If your pot doesn’t already have them, drill several holes in the bottom of the container for drainage.

You can find contact info for your local Extension office by clicking on your state at www.JMGkids.us/MyCounty.

