

# Sprouting 101

(v1.013, 21-Apr-2010, 11:11 PM)

## Introduction

A couple of friends asked me how I sprout, so I put together a little guide on sprouting just lentils. I don't do greens, but I have done alfalfa successfully. Here's how I go about it.

## Methods

There are many ways to go about it and I have used at least four different ways in the past:

1. Using a sprouting device; aka sprouter. I used the one similar to the **Bio Set** at the bottom of this website, but it didn't work very well for me in the early days: <http://www.sproutpeople.com/devices/index.html>
2. Using hemp/cotton sprouting bags that you hang over a sink or outside a window. Worked well in India, but I think it needs to be hot and humid. Also, too much work removing the sprouts that grow into the cloth's weave, and then sanitizing the bags, etc.
3. Sprouting in bowls with either paper towels or cotton kitchen towels. Not bad; but again additional cleanup.
4. Sprouting in mason jars with netting; easy, hardly any cleanup; can do it under the sink, can do it in the car, just about anywhere, inconspicuously, simple and by far the most effective way I have found.

## Notes

Here are some things to keep in mind while you go about sprouting:

- Seeds have to be whole, not split!
- Make sure the seeds are good for sprouting. Some seeds just don't sprout, because they have been heated (pasteurized, maybe?!). There is no life force left in them, and no matter what you do they will not sprout.
- The whole seeds from the local coops are best. Also, Whole Foods (green lentils, French lentils, mung, chickpeas, adzuki), Henry's, Indian stores (muth/moth, red lentils, black urad dal).
- The best source of seeds I have had are from **The Sprout People** (<http://www.sproutpeople.com/>). Every one of their seeds sprouts; pretty amazing as yields can vary dramatically from one batch to another. And, theirs are completely organic with no salmonella included. They are also one of the best resources on the web for sprouting.
- I find smaller seeds easier to do, and avoid the larger ones as a rule, as I find them hard to digest.
- Use the largest mouth mason jars you can find, and remove the center part of the cover (keep it handy for when you put them in the fridge), and replace with a 5"x5" piece of fiberglass (not metal) screen material from the hardware store.
- When sprouts are stored dry in the fridge, they can last for weeks.

## Sprouting Smaller Beans

I consider the smaller beans to be the size of mung, red lentils, green lentils, brown lentils and French lentils.

1. Fill about 1/8 of a bottle with seeds. If you put much more than that they will exceed the size of the bottle, if you let them sprout long enough.
2. Soak them in ample water for 4-8 hours. They will expand to approximately twice their size.
3. I like to use pretty warm, if not nearly hot water. You should be able to put your hand in the water and move the seeds around to get the air out of there and the powder off them. If you can't, the water is too hot!
4. The colder the water, the longer it will take to soften the skin; maybe soak overnight? If you soak them too long, bubbles will form (foam) on the surface. I think, that is too long, so next time, make sure to soak it for less time.
5. Rinse thoroughly with warm water.
6. Drain completely by flipping the bottles over and letting the water drain out of the netting.
7. Put under in a dark warm area, e.g., under the sink, for 12 hours or so.
8. Rinse with lots of water, and drain completely, twice a day until the length you want. Even the smallest tail, is ready to eat.
9. Make sure they are dry before storing.

**Note:** *After they sprout, I find that I can just leave them without rinsing (or adding water) for several days, and they actually grow longer and faster and stay nice and dry! Nature is amazing!*

## Sprouting Larger Beans

I consider larger beans to be the size of chickpeas, adzukis and black-eyed peas. There may be better ways to go about this, but this is the method used by a local raw food restaurant for their chickpea hummus:

1. Soak as in small beans; they use more water, so use less beans.
2. Put them in a metal strainer and cover with a damp cloth or paper towel, leaving the bottom to air out.
3. Rinse several times a day thoroughly, and keep them in a dark spot.
4. Don't let them grow too long as they go rancid easily, so smell often! If they smell odd; start again!

**Enjoy!**