



LETTUCE CHALLENGE 2015 PLANT CARE TIPS

WHAT'S INCLUDED WITH YOUR LETTUCE DELIVERY 2/25-2/26/2015:

- Lettuce seedlings in 2 ½ inch peat pots (one for each student in your class)
- 2 extra seedlings in pots: 1 speckled (for comparisons) and 1 buttercrunch
- 100% recycled aluminum pan (holds 20 plants) to use as tray
- Extra 100% recycled aluminum pan to hold overflow >20 & extra seedlings
- Popsicle sticks for each student to mark their name on a plant

CHECKLIST FOR PLANT CARE:

- **Monitoring Water Levels**
 - Peat pots should sit in aluminum pan or waterproof tray with an appropriate amount of water. It's a great way to see the capillary action, as the soil draws up water up from below.
 - Green Schools recommends you recycle containers to use as additional plant trays if needed (egg carton covers, veggie/meat trays, aluminium trays, dishware, etc.). For watering cans, a variety of containers can be used such as empty yogurt cups, reusable water bottles, etc.
 - The soil and peat pots should be moist but not soggy. Touch the top of the soil to check the moisture level. Do not allow your soil or pots to dry out.
- **Adequate Light**
 - While not necessary, electric grow lights are recommended. Your school should have a set available for use. New plants should receive at least 12 hours of light per day. Further details are provided on these sites:
<http://www.wikihow.com/Grow-Vegetables-With-Grow-Lights>
<http://www.gardeners.com/GardeningUnderLights/5080,default,pg.html>
- **Appropriate Temperature**
 - You will need to keep plants cool. "For best results, keep in mind that lettuce is a cooler weather plant; keep the growing container from getting above 75 degrees. Higher growing temperatures will not harm the plants, but the temperature will have a tremendous impact on how well the lettuce is able to ball into a pronounced head. Pots kept outside, in cool, not cold, weather often do the best." – Stamford Lettuce Challenge, Hints to Grow Lettuce
- **Amendments**
 - Amendments are optional. However here are some notes from the Stamford Lettuce Challenge if you want to experiment. Take notes of what you're adding. Compost and in-classroom vermicomposting workshops are also available from the GEC.
 - Fertilizer:
 - Lettuce has a lot of green so choose a fertilizer that is higher in nitrogen (N)
 - Look at the package label that identifies the proportion of N (nitrogen- for leaves, greening), P (phosphorus- for root development) and K (potassium- for flowering)
 - An example of high nitrogen would be 30-10-10; organics like Espoma Organic Plant-Tone would have a 5-3-3 proportion; generally organics are preferred, and you want to avoid "excessive" nitrogen
 - If plants seem to be stalling, this means they may need a bit more fertilizer but refer to package for directions on fertilizer use.
- **Space & Time for Your Plants**
 - The simplest thing you will need is space on your windowsill. The extra time you are giving to water plants, or to make connections in your curriculum are meant to be shared and celebrated.

Stay tuned for more information about buttercrunch in the following weeks. In the meantime, remember, a lot can happen during the growing period. More than perfect plants, we are looking for an enriching experience and think it's a great opportunity to tell a story, make observations, share in a community project, and try something new. Thanks for growing minds with the Lettuce Challenge!