In order to ensure viable seed, an entire group of spinach plants must be allowed to flower. Provide space for 20 plants, at least 12 inches apart. Seed set will occur on the female plants only.

Let seeds dry on the plants and gather seed from as many plants as possible. Harvest seed pods when they turn grey or beige, collecting closed pods to avoid scattering seeds. Fully dried seeds are hard, and will not dent with a thumbnail.

There are several methods to thresh seeds and remove chaff.

Small harvests can be threshed by rubbing seed pods between your hands or against the inside of a bucket, causing pods to break open.

For larger harvests, place seed stalks in large tubs or on tarps and tread on them. Discard stalks after seeds are dislodged.

Screen and winnow remaining material to remove chaff. After removing chaff, place in container.

Store spinach seed in dry, cool conditions up to one year for best germination results.

CREDITS

https://www.seedsavers.org/gold-rush-organic-lettuce
https://www.seedsavers.org/grandma-hadleys-organic-lettuce
https://www.seedsavers.org/bloomsdale-organic-spinach
https://www.seedsavers.org/learn#growing-guides

LETTUCE/SPINACH

Lettuce “Gold Rush”
Looseleaf
(Lactuca sativa)

Lettuce “Grandma Hadley”
Butterhead
(Lactuca sativa)

Spinach “Bloomsdale”
(Spinacia oleracea)

RPLMN.ORG/SEED

FRIENDS OF THE
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History Center of Olmsted County

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507.328.2309 | www.rplmn.org

02-2020
Harvest in early morning or evening and immerse in cool water to prevent wilting. Refrigerate in plastic bags with a paper towel to absorb moisture and help keep leaves dry.

When flower stems appear, lettuce changes flavor so taste-test leaves before harvesting. Leaves grown in hot conditions may become bitter. If too bitter, pull up plant and compost or allow plant to go to seed.

**HOW TO EAT**

Serve lettuce or spinach fresh in sandwiches or salads. Combine many varieties for the best flavor.

Spinach can be sautéed and served with scrambled eggs or in soups. Spinach also makes a healthy addition to fruit smoothies.

**HOW TO SAVE SEED**

**RATING: EASY WITH PRECAUTIONS**

**Lettuce:** annual, self-pollinates.

In mid-summer allow some lettuce plants to grow a flower stalk and go to seed.

Choose the healthiest plants, spaced at least 12 inches apart. If saving seed from more than one variety, separate by at least 10 feet.

When seedpods turn grey, collect seed promptly to avoid wind scattering the seeds. Bagging the seed heads prevents seeds scattering if seed pods burst before picking.

Seedpods can be rubbed or shaken into bags or buckets to separate seed from pods. Use screening and winnowing techniques to remove chaff. Lettuce seed is viable for 5-6 years when stored in cool, dry conditions.

**Spinach:** annual, wind pollinated.

Grow only one variety of spinach at a time to avoid cross-pollination. Spinach plants are either male or female. You will have both when growing spinach.