~ All About Sprouts ~
Creating Winter Sustenance

As daylight becomes more precious and the garden sleeps under the glistening frost, eating fresh living food from our gardens becomes a reminiscent dream. Well, my friends, this year you will able to enjoy a greater diversity of freshly grown food within the comforts of your cozy home. How? Sprouts of course! Fresh homegrown sprouts are packed full of vital nutrients, require no soil, little time and effort, and are easy to use in the kitchen! By the end of this article, you will know the essential whys, hows, and whats of sprouting all year round.

WHY SPROUTS?

Because, sprouting is N.E.A.T.! N.E.A.T. is simple and like a sprout, it is packed full of phenomenal value, waiting to be experienced! So, let's delve right into what makes sprouting so N.E.A.T.

NUTRITIOUS

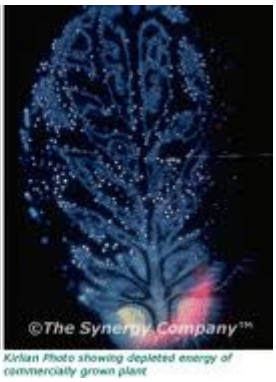
The nutritional value of sprouts was summed up very well in an article titled *Sprouts the Miracle Food* by Steve Meyerowitz (a.k.a. 'The Sproutman').

> 'Sprouts are baby plants in their prime. At this stage of their growth, they have a greater concentration of proteins, vitamins, minerals, enzymes, RNA, DNA, bio-flavonoids, T-cells, etc., than at any other point in the plants life – even when compared with the mature vegetable! Because sprouts are baby plants, their delicate cell walls release live nourishment easily. Their nutrients exist in elemental form and the abundance of enzymes make them easy to digest even for those with weak digestion.'

ENERGIZING

Being highly digestible, sprouts offer us maximal energy per calorie consumed. That means we will have more energy for playing in the gardens and enjoying the experiences of life. In addition to their high digestibility, sprouts are continuing to grow up until the time we eat them and therefore offer us more life force energy! To illustrate this point, there are three pictures below which have been taken with Kirlian photography. Kirlian photography is able to capture images of the bio-energy field (a.k.a. chi, life force, auric field) that surrounds living objects. The first image on the left is of organically grown barley grass which has a nice radiant energy at its crown. Next is a picture of a conventionally grown vegetable which has a darkened appearance and the picture on the right is of a fresh living sprout! Which one looks the most energetic? I think it speaks for itself...

Kirlian Photo of Organically Grown Barley Grass



Kirlian Photo showing depleted energy of commercially grown plant

AFFORDABLE

Growing your own sprouts at home not only offers maximal energy, but also affords great economic returns! A half cup of seed mix (broccoli, radish, clover, alfalfa) costs about a dollar (when purchased in bulk from a reputable source of seeds for sprouting) and within 5 to 7 days turns into 16 cups of fresh organic salad sprouts which can feed 2 voracious veggie lovers for 1 week! At the store, you would pay about $20 for that many salad sprouts!

TRANSFORMATIVE

The very nature of sprouts is transformative; taking a dormant seed and turning it in to a vibrant healthy expression of life. When we incorporate sprouting into to our daily lives, we will inevitably change. We will have to allocate some space to grow our sprouts, time to rinse the seeds as they grow, and of course find creative ways to incorporate all of these sprouts into our daily diet. The simple practice of sprouting can help us reconnect with our food, body, and life – its growth, flavours, and sensations. I invite you to explore how sprouting can help transform your life!

Now that we know why sprouts are so NEAT, let's go over how to grow them!

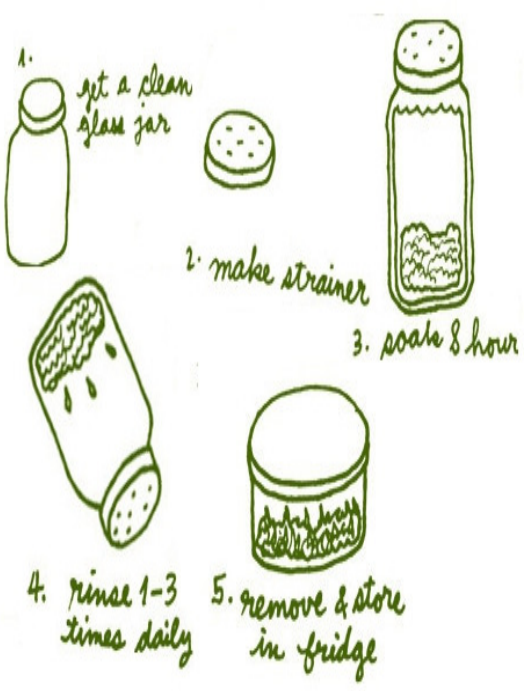
HOW TO SPROUT

In this section, we will cover the Jar Method of growing sprouts. All that you will need is a wide mouth glass jar (a 1L Mason jar works well), a mesh screen (plastic window screening cut so that there is about 1 inch excess over all sides of the jar lip) and a thick rubber band and seeds.

The process of growing sprouts is incredibly easy ... SOAK, RINSE & STORE!

SOAK

1. Measure out seed. For a 1L jar use approximately 2 Tbsp. of small seeds like broccoli, radish, clover, and alfalfa. It should be just enough to cover the bottom of the jar. For larger seeds like lentils, chickpeas, oat berries, and rye, fill 1/3 of the jar with seeds.
2. Cover the filled jars with a mesh screen and secure in place using a rubber band. Rinse seeds off by swirling a bit water in the jar and draining.
3. Add water (approximately a 2:1 ratio of water to seed) and let the seeds soak for 6 – 8 hours.



RINSE

1. Drain out soaking water. Rinse sprouts with filtered water and drain. I like to use this water for house plants.
2. Place the jar face down at a 45° angle to allow water to drain and adequate air flow. Sprouts should be kept well drained yet moist away from direct light.
3. Rinse sprouts 2-3 times daily until sprouts are ready for storage.
4. When salad greens (broccoli, radish, clover, alfalfa, etc.) develop their first two true leaves, move them into strong indirect sunlight for 1-2 days for greening and increased chlorophyll.

STORE

1. Rinse mature sprouts (3-5cm long) and then let them drain and dry for 6-8 hours. Place sprouts in a sealed container lined with a paper towel to absorb excess moisture and store in the refrigerator.
2. Once stored, sprouts will keep for 1-2 weeks kept in the refrigerator.

* Remember, this procedure may vary slightly depending on what seeds are being sprouted.

WHAT TO SPROUT

Grains 	Soak Time	Ready In
Oats	6 – 8 hrs.	12 – 36 hrs.
Barley	6 – 8 hrs.	12 – 36 hrs.
Wheat/Rye	6 – 8 hrs.	12 – 36 hrs.
Quinoa	2 – 4 hrs.	12 – 24 hrs.

Legumes	Soak Time	Ready In
Mung Beans	8 hrs.	2 – 3 days
Lentils	8 hrs.	2 – 3 days
Chickpeas	8 hrs.	3 days
Adzuki Beans	8 – 12 hrs.	5 days

*Do not sprout soybeans or kidney beans.

Seeds	Soak Time	Ready In
Clover	6 hrs.	4 – 5 days
Radish	8 hrs.	4 – 5 days
Alfalfa	8 hrs.	4 – 5 days
Fenugreek	8 hrs.	3 – 4 days

Nuts	Soak Time	Ready In
 All Varieties **Don't Sprout Cashews & Peanuts! (Can be toxic)*	ırs.	Once soaked store in fridge in clean water changing water every 2-3 days.

You can sprout any kind of seed, and they all offer their own unique flavours and textures. The four tables to the left offer examples of the types of grains, legumes, vegetable seeds, and nuts that I commonly use. The pictures in the center show what the sprouted seeds will look like.

SPROUTIN' MEALS

With sprouts on hand, it's time to be creative in the kitchen! Sprouted grains and legumes can be used to make cookies, bread, oatmeal, or tossed into a soup, stew or curry! Salad sprouts mixed with homemade sauerkraut and diced avocado is one of my favourite salads! Let your imagination ignite your culinary creativity as you make wholesome sprouted dishes.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

You now have all of the fundamental tools to get sprouting. It is up to you to experience the incredible gift of incorporating fresh living sprouts into your daily life!

All of the best in your sprouting journey!