

GOURMET LETTUCE BOWL



A minimum of 10 different organic leaf lettuces artfully arranged in a 14" plastic bowl.

As you pick young leaves, plants will re-grow; giving you fresh gourmet salads for a *minimum* of two months – although they should last until the first frost if well taken care of.

My special soil blend needs no additional fertilizing - just keep the bowl watered and enjoy!

For best results, while temperatures are still reasonably cool, bowl should be placed in full sun. As the heat of summer moves in (above 75°), relocate the bowl to partial shade and even full shade or a garage, if temperatures soar.

Lettuces are 'cool season' crop and are genetically programmed to 'bolt' (i.e. - go to seed) when temperatures are consistently elevated. That is why I recommend moving the bowls into complete shade, if necessary.

Keeping the bowls evenly moist at all times will also extend the life of the plants. Lettuce is comprised almost entirely of water, if allowed to dry out it will get bitter and go to seed prematurely.

SUCCESS TIP #1: MY BOWL COMPLETELY DRIED OUT AND ALL THE LETTUCE IS WILTED.

This tip will work most of the time, but will depend on how long it was dry.

Fill a bucket or anything bigger than the salad bowl with at least eight inches of water. Using two hands, hold either side of the salad bowl and place your thumbs on the soil in the bowl (you'll see why in a second). SLOWLY begin to submerge the salad bowl into the water. The soil will start to lift out of the bowl (this is why your thumbs are in place to hold it down). Keep pushing the bowl under the water until it is completely submerged and NO MORE AIR BUBBLES are coming up.

What you've done is rehydrated the core of the bowl. You should probably cut back all the lettuces to about 3 inches or so high. Put the bowl in a shady place and forget about it for at least 3 or 4 days. Within a week, you will see new growth appear.

SUCCESS TIP #2: I'M LEAVING ON VACATION AND I DON'T HAVE ANYONE TO WATER MY BOWL.

Depending on how hot it is and how long you will be gone, this trick should work for at least a long weekend. Find a bowl or saucer that is bigger than the salad bowl itself. Fill it with water and set the salad bowl inside of it. Now you have a quasi-self-watering system.

A couple of tidbits that are noteworthy:

- If you will be away in the heat of the summer, then this will work for a few days. But, it is not a long term solution. For one, because eventually the water in the bowl will be used up or evaporate, but more importantly, you don't want to keep the salad bowl mix too wet, or the roots will rot.
- If you need to be gone for an extended period of time (say a week or more), you might be better off to trim the whole bowl down to 3 to 4 inch stubs, water it well and put it in a cool garage or even your house. Trimming the plants will slow down photosynthesis and combined with the cooler temperatures and shade, it will slow things down even further.
- Lastly, have a friend or relative babysit it for you. But, don't be upset if you don't get it back. <grin>

LETTUCE BOWL: Maintenance & Care



This is the actual bowl that I used for this pictorial. I began **early in the morning**, when the lettuces were still cool from the previous night and retaining as much moisture as they were going to.



This is how it looked when I finished.

Note: You do not have to sheer it like this. You can just trim it, every other day or so. The advantage of doing it like this is that you revitalize the entire bowl at one time.



First thing you need is a bowl filled with **ICE** cold water.



As you trim, **GENTLY** add the leaves to the bowl, discarding any that are not worthy of eating.



As you continue trimming, **GENTLY** push the leaves under the water. I'm repeating myself, because crushed or bruised leaves will turn 'yucky' in a hurry.



This is my 15 year-old Tupperware Salad Spinner. It's the best tool you can have. In this picture, I have already spun the lettuce and it is ready to go in bags.



In one gallon zipper bags, place **TWO** sheets of paper toweling that has been folded in half (four layers). Add your lettuce and then zip the bag **HALF WAY** shut (you want some air circulation) and ideally you will put it in your hydrator drawer of your refrigerator. I, however, can't because both of my drawers are filled with seeds.

Depending on how dry the leaves were when you added them to the zipper bags (excess moisture will cause premature rotting) your Gourmet Leaf Lettuce should last at least a week or more. Hopefully, though, you will eat it much faster than this. Enjoy!