

# QUICK GUIDE TO LETTUCE

There are hundreds of varieties of lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*) that appear in all shapes, textures, flavors and sizes. Most lettuce are hardy, cool season crops that can be planted as early as the soil can be worked. They are easily grown from seed from spring through late summer (with some protection from the hot afternoon sun) and again in the cool temperatures of fall. Lettuce grows quickly: water frequently and fertilize with fish emulsion or compost tea. For baby greens, sow thickly and harvest with scissors.

## TYPES OF LETTUCE:

**Batavian or French Crisp-** The hardiest of all lettuce, Batavians hold less water than crispheads and more vitamins as well. Broad leaves with edged frills hold up well for rolls and wraps. It doesn't ship well and is found less often in markets and stores. Batavia is a blend of looseleaf and crisphead with a rich flavor. '**Laura**', '**Loma**', '**Nevada**'.

**Butterhead-** Rosettes of tender leaves have a sweet taste and buttery texture. Leaves are broader than long and can be gently savoyed or ruffled. This group includes '**Bibb**', '**Boston**' and '**Lime**'. '**Buttercrunch**', '**Pirate**', '**Four Seasons**', '**Tom Thumb**', '**Red Riding Hood**', '**Esmerelda**', '**Continuity**', '**Speckled Amish**'.

**Crisphead or Heading-** Large, firm heads of crunchy lettuce with a high water content and mild flavor. This type was originally known as "Crisphead" but is now commonly referred to as "Iceberg." California grows 70% of this crop and growers began to transport the lettuce filled with crushed ice. '**Red Iceberg**', '**Summertime**', '**Reine Des Glaces**'.

**Looseleaf-** Sweet to mild tasting leaves in an amazing array of colors and shapes, this type of lettuce is the most varied. Red, green, bronze, speckled and combinations colors make for a treat to look at and eat in a fresh salad. Leaves may also be curled, frilled or deeply lobed. '**Red or Green Deer Tongue**', '**Red or Green Oakleaf**', '**Sweet Valentine**', '**Thai Green**', '**Red Sails**', '**Mascara**', '**Merlot**', '**New Red Fire**'.

**Romaine or Cos-** Juicy and crunchy with a refreshing distinctive flavor with heavily ribbed centers on an oblong head with leaves longer than they are wide. Romaine or Cos (an ancient city in Greece) has been cultivated and eaten cooked or raw for almost 5,000 years and may very well be the oldest form of cultivated lettuce. '**Jericho**', '**Rouge d'Hiver** (Red in Winter)', '**Forellenschluss** (Troutsback)', '**Little Gem**', '**Petite Rouge**', '**Devil's Tongue**', '**Outredgeous**', '**Valmaine**' .

## NUTRITION:

Lettuce is a good source of vitamin A, C and K as well as calcium, potassium and iron. It also has trace elements of copper and manganese and anti-oxidants.