

My Journey with Sprouting

By Fran

I have been trying to grow and like sprouts for many years now. I grew up in a "hippy town" in the South of Western Australia and so the desire to sprout things was high, however I never much appreciated the taste or texture of home grown sprouts. I tried REALLY hard. Through the years I have bought expensive sprouters that electronically time a mist over the trays of sprouts, the old jar method etc. and each time, although I had great success growing the sprouts, I couldn't appreciate the strong grassy "green" taste of the results or the tough tailed root portions.

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Closeup of the retrofitted lid

I used to work for a delicatessen and they would get imported antipasti vegetables from Italy in huge glass jars. When the jars were empty, they would discard them and so I asked them if I could have the jars. They said "sure" and I amassed quite a collective of lovely jars. I ended up giving most of them away when we moved to Tasmania, however for some reason I kept one large jar that my husband had retrofitted for one of my sprouting attempts by cutting out a portion of the metal lid and siliconing in a round piece of metal screen door mesh. I have NO idea why I kept it because by that stage I knew I wasn't going to bother with home sprouting again, but I did.

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Seeds soaking overnight prior to going into the sprouting jar

Fast forward to the "cost of living crisis" of 2023 and suddenly the price of fresh vegetables skyrocketed. We have a lot of possums on our 4 acre property but they are easily prevented from eating our crops, however the rats are proving to be a serious problem. We built 2 fully enclosed large cages over a series of water wicking raised garden beds that we made out of old fridges and freezers that we bought from the local tip shop and thought that would stop the rats but it hasn't sadly and so we get very little of what we grow here (until we can find a solution to our rat problem) and when the price of veggies skyrocketed I had to think smarter, not harder as we are a low income family who eat a LOT of vegetables.

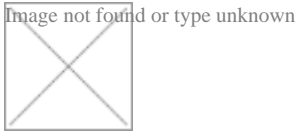
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Soaked seeds into the sprouting jar!

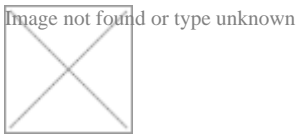
I saw a video on YouTube from a Vietnamese girl who's mum used to grow sprouts for her market stall in

Vietnam and it completely revolutionised my sprout "experience". I tried out her method and it worked brilliantly. I now grow, and eat, 4 litres of sprouts every 5 or so days on rotation. I grow a mung bean and adzuki bean mix for the tastiest largest yield and I get my beans from my local health food shop. I soak the beans (130g adzuki and 170g of mung beans/300g total) overnight till they have swell up and then strain them off and rinse them (keeping the strained soaking water and rinsing water in a bucket for using on the garden) and put them into my husbands retrofitted 4 litre jar with the mesh in the lid. I then put the jar into a fitted wardrobe in my spare room and shut the door. The objective is to prevent the sprouts from seeing the light which causes them to form the tough roots and grassy tasting leaves early on. It works!



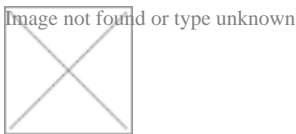
After 5 or so days, ready to go in the fridge

Every day I remove the sprouts (in the evening when it is dark) and soak the sprouts for about 10 minutes by covering them in water and then drain them (into my bucket) till they stop dripping and put them back into the wardrobe in the spare room. "done". After 5 or so days (differs with the seasons) I have a 4 litre jar full to the top with delicious sprouts that I absolutely love.



Yummy sprouts!

You end up with sprouts that are very similar to the mung bean sprouts that you can buy in the supermarkets but without the ridiculous price tag or environmentally destructive plastic bag. You can pretty much sprout any legume or seed this way but you would have to tweak the length of time for sprouting depending on the legume/seed. Things like buckwheat should only be sprouted till you see a tiny tail as they go slimy very quickly. Note, there are some larger beans that can be sprouted but should only be consumed cooked. Red kidney beans are one example. My advice would be to research anything carefully that you are planning to sprout just to make sure that you are aware of any extra steps needed in the process.



Sprouts transferred to storage jar and fridge-ready

I am an absolute sprout convert now and eat them every single day. Growing my own gave me back an affordable and most enjoyable highly nutritious vegetable that has a multitude of uses from raw through to cooked. I wholeheartedly recommend sprouting as a way to easily grow a crop without pests even getting a look in. Very satisfying when pretty much everything else is predated around here. It is also incredibly economical. 300g of sprouts growing in 5 days to 4 litres of sprouts is a brilliant return for the small outlay for the beans.

Link to Fran's blog 'The Road to Serendipity'