

Trouble Shooting Your Crop

SPROUTS

- Mold:
 - a) sterilize equipment
 - hot soapy water then rinse
 - vinegar, then hot water rinse
 - b) drain all excess water from sprouting container
 - d) sprinkle seed less densely

NOTE: fuzzy on the bottom = roots.
Fuzzy with moist, shriveled top = mold
- Weak, spindly plants:
 - a) Intensify light, making it even over all areas
 - b) Increase humidity (spritz lightly & more often)
- Poor germination:
 - a) store seeds in breathable container at room temperature, no direct sunlight
 - b) use desiccator packs/drums from vitamin/medication pills to keep container dry inside
 - c) sprinkle seed less densely
 - d) use only seed with < 1 year “best before” date
 - e) use only from reputable vendors (be wary of seed “on sale” as it is often old)
 - f) use only seed varieties producer has labeled as “seeds for sprouting”
 - h) lower chlorine level in water by letting it sit for 12-24 hrs before use, or use filtered water
- Digestive concerns:
 - a) Use filtered water (see also “h” below)
 - b) Rinse sprouts 2- 3 times daily
 - c) sterilize equipment

MICROGREENS

- Mold:
 - a) techniques for sprouts, plus:
 - b) use bagged, sterilized potting soil, or
 - c) fresh hydroponic mats (hemp or coir fibre)
 - c) use only packaged, organic liquid fertilizers at specified concentration levels
- Poor germination:
 - a) techniques for sprouts, plus
 - b) scatter seed less densely on grow medium, and press down with another tray until sprouted
 - c) make sure light levels high enough once seeds sprouted
 - d) make sure temperature at soil level is above 60 F
 - e) use seed sprouting mats below grow trays
- Weak, spindly plants:
 - a) techniques for sprouts, plus:
 - b) lower fertilizers to 2/3 or 1/2 strength
- Digestive concerns:
 - a) Use filtered water
 - b) rinse plants at least 3 times daily
- Pests (flies, aphid) – rare, but possible
 - a) sterilize trays & lids / domes (if using)
 - b) throw out soil and use sterilized potting soil or grow medium
 - c) do not use home-made fertilizer or compost tea

Food Safe

Primary sources of contamination:

- Water
- Equipment & tools
- Seeds

Data quoted in article From Mumm's Sprouting Seeds webpage:

"In a given year, getting hit by lightning (1.29 people per million) is more likely than contracting E. Coli (1.1 people per million) from meat, poultry, shellfish, milk, eggs and produce combined. Since produce represents the smallest risk of these foods (41 outbreaks in 5 years) and since sprouts represent an even smaller risk than produce (12 in 40 years), the benefits of eating sprouts dramatically, statistically and historically outweigh the contamination risks."

Before You Handle Product:

- Wash your hands thoroughly before handling seeds or sprouts
- For large seeds, rinse well before starting the initial soaking period & strain through colander
- Use only sterilized trays, sprouter system, glass jars and screens for each new batch
- Rinse sprouts or microgreens well at least twice a day
- Ensure grower trays are thoroughly drained after each misting / watering

Trust Your Nose

- Earthy = good!
- Rubber (if hydroponics) = mats = okay!
- Sulphur (broccoli & other brassicas) = okay!
- Sour / rotten = bad ... throw out

Note:

Peas, beans, & other lentils can smell sweet and slightly rotten.

For sprouts, rinse 2-3 times in a medium flow of water and swish around tray, draining well between each.

For micros, rinse in medium flow 3 times, draining well between each.

The plants will suddenly smell freshly sweet and inviting again. Continue to grow and enjoy!

Canadian Sources for Seed & Equipment

(organic, non-GMO, high quality, and all specific varieties chosen for sprouting consistency)

All can be ordered online, and most available in retail outlets

Sprouts

- West Coast Seeds
- Mumm's Sprouting Seeds
- Raw Nutrition (carries Mumm's & Vogel's "Biosnacky" brands in small quantities, so good for beginners)
- Your local health food store

Supplies

- Home Hardware (basic: trays, lights, timers, etc.)
- Home Depot (basic: trays, lights, timers, etc.)
- Sprout Master (good for jars, lids, screens, etc., but expensive)
- Lee Valley Tools (some handy, unique items: look in propagation, container gardening, or search under "sprouts")
- Raw Nutrition (some basic plus hydroponic supplies, wheatgrass growers)