

Growing a Great Garden

Starting Seeds

GrowEase Lettuce Tray

Garden Version #2 of the Little Green Thumbs garden comes with a 'GrowEase' black self-watering tray. This tray is self-watering, meaning that there will be a reservoir of water in the bottom of the tray that will 'wick' up to the soil through the capillary mat, similar to your growing containers. Set up your tray as shown below.

Ensure that the ends of your capillary mat are submerged into the reservoir tray below. Keep the reservoir full and the mat will deliver water to the plants as needed. The reservoir should last about a week before needing to be refilled.

To plant your GrowEase tray, fill your growing tray with soil about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the top. Give your tray a tap on a table or desk to settle the soil down. Spread your lettuce seeds onto the soil. There should be one lettuce seed in every square centimeter of soil. Cover your seeds with about $\frac{1}{8}$ cm of soil and pat down. When you first plant, tray watering your soil from the top to moisten seeds. Cover your seeds with your clear cover until the seeds begin to sprout. Place under grow lights once sprouting.



Parts of your tray all fit in to each other. Ensure that the ends of your capillary mat are submerged in water.



Lettuce does not require the same amount of intense light as most garden vegetables and does not like it too warm. You can place your lettuce trays in the edge of your light foot print or to the edges of your shelving unit.



Monitoring & Observation

Students should be involved monitoring the growth of plants. Encourage students to make observations about the plants while they are growing. Pay attention to germination; the number, size and colours of plant leaves; how a plant's position changes based on light or if the plants look stressed or sick. Students might take measurements of height and display the information on bar or line graphs. Ask students to consider:

How does plant growth for each plant variety compare over time?

Which vegetable sprouted first? Last?

How would you compare the leaves of different plants?

Which vegetable variety grows the fastest?