MICROGREENS

TEVA IN A BOX brings participants to the intersection of Judaism and sustainability for a small taste of Hazon's experiential education curriculum. Learn more at hazon.org/teva.

MICROGREENS are mini versions of regular vegetables. The shoots are harvested at a young age, before they grow into fully matured plants. They have a wonderful flavor and are richer in nutrition than their larger counterparts. Best of all, microgreens are fun and easy to grow!

ECOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Before planting, we like to get the participants thinking a little more deeply about gardening and food. The following questions are good for sparking ideas and discussion.

- **What is organic?** For almost the entire history of human existence, humans ate organic food. In fact, practically everything that has ever lived before the past 70 years ate organic food.
- **How old is a seed?** Seeds are alive just like you and me. The seeds we are planting today may have been grown a few years ago. When you plant the seed this year, will it be a one-year-old plant or an older plant?
  - There is a story about a seed that was found in Israel which addresses this question: A date pit was found in Masada on the top of a mountain in an ancient village. It was discovered by archeologists at the bottom of a clay pot. Eleven years ago, it was planted, and now it's about 10 feet tall. So, the question is: Is it a eleven-year-old plant, or a two-thousand-and-eleven-year-old plant? According to botanists, it's a two-thousand-and-eleven-year-old plant, because the seed has been alive for two thousand and eleven years!
- **What does a plant need to grow?** Sun, soil, water, air – everything we eat and everything we wear!
- **What is a greenhouse?** A greenhouse is a glass structure for plants to live in. It traps heat and moisture to create an optimal growing environment for these plants. Our atmosphere does this with the planet. We are replicating the effects of a greenhouse by covering our plants with a Ziploc bag.

JEWISH FRAMING

- Passover is a holiday of spring to remind us of newness and change that can happen in the coming year. What better way to remind ourselves than growing new plants? This is an easy activity that can be done/ready to harvest within one to two weeks of planting.
- "Tzadikim (righteous) people of good deeds… do not waste in this world even a mustard seed."

  —Sefer HaChinuch (529), 13th century German pietistic text

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Teva works to fundamentally transform Jewish education through experiential learning that fosters Jewish, ecological, and food sustainability. Teva is a program of Hazon. Learn more at hazon.org/teva.

RUNNING THE PROGRAM

MATERIALS

- Small pots (about 4”x4”)
- Plastic ziplock baggies that fit over the top of pots (quart size)
- Bowls filled with three different seed selections (i.e. broccoli, radish, and peas)
- Plastic spoons (to put in the cups for the participants to spread the seeds in their trays)
- Organic potting soil (does not need to contain fertilizer)
- Sharpie marker and tape (to label the students’ names and the cups of seeds)
- Scissors (these can come in handy)
- Caring for Your Microgreens handout (the last page of these instructions)
- Optional: An example tray of microgreens (started two weeks before program)
- Optional: Popsicle sticks for students to label which seeds are where in their garden

DIRECTIONS

1 SOIL

Have the students come to the soil-filling station by groups. An educator should help students get soil into the pots. The soil should come to about three quarters of the way up the side of the container.

2 SEEDING

When all of the participants have their soil, use one pot as an example tray to show proper seeding technique. Using a spoon and a bowl of seeds, scatter the seeds onto the soil. Students should choose one seed variety because each crop grows at different rates. Ideally, there should be about one seed's width between each seed on the tray. However, it really doesn't matter – the seeds will grow if they are piled up.



3 OPTIONAL: LABELING

Use popsicle sticks as markers for students to label their gardens.

4 COVERING THE SEEDS

When students are finished planting, have them take a small handful of soil and lightly bury their seeds. It is okay if all of the seeds aren't buried, or if they're buried very deeply. Microgreens are very forgiving.

5 CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Hand out plastic baggies and Caring for Your Microgreens handout. Explain that this plastic bag will act as a greenhouse for your microgreens. Students should put the instruction sheet and their small pot of microgreens inside the ziplock bag to prevent spillage on the journey home.

Caring for your Microgreens

- Take your microgreen container and place it indoors in a sunny location. Keep the plastic bag over it to create a mini-greenhouse for your mini-vegetables.
- Water the soil enough so that it's a little moist. It won't take a lot. You want it moist, but not soaked. Because of your mini-greenhouse, you won't have to water the plant again for a few days.
- Watch it grow. Have a good time. You're making food!
- Once the plant begins to sprout, unseal the bottom a little bit for added ventilation. Close it around the bottom of the planter.
- Every few days, feel the soil to check if it's moist. If it's dry, add a little water.
- Growing microgreens usually takes 1 to 3 weeks. When your greens have reached a height of 3-5 inches, harvest them by cutting at the bottom, just above the soil line.
- Rinse and enjoy! Your greens can be eaten fresh as they are (the leaves and the whole stem can be eaten), or used in a salad, on a sandwich, or as a garnish.

Interested in Learning More?

Microgreens: A Guide to Gowing Nutrient-Packed Greens
by Eric Franks & Jasmine Richardson

Microgreens: How to Grow Nature's Own Superfood
by Fionna Hill