

Fresh, Tiny, Crunchy, Green, Healthy... So Many Words Come to My Mind to Describe these Small Leafy Vegetables: Microgreens

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My lockdown days were boring like everyone's. Since I travelled from UAE to Kerala, I was asked to stay in quarantine for 14 days initially, then later on more 14 days, a total of 28 days. I seriously didn't want to waste those days. So, I thought gardening would be a better option and started planting my favorite table roses. The print media and broadcast media these days discuss how the whole economy is suffering from COVID-19. During these days the green leafy veggies, which are inevitable in our daily diet may not be easily available, as most of the markets are closed. I myself re-discovered those ingredients, which are far better than those veggies we buy from markets. Which can be grown in our kitchen, that neither require land nor fertilizers.

Until known about the health and nutrient benefits they were mainly used by chefs in high-end restaurants to garnish and add colors and surprising flavors to dishes. However, in this day and age these tiny plants are increasing rapidly in popularity and are starting to find their way to our homemade dishes.

Figure 1

Due to their high antioxidant content, incredibly rich nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, carotenoids and fibers, microgreens are considered as functional food- a food that promotes

health by boosting immunity. Malnutrition and lack of minerals or vitamins are the problems faced by all nations. One of the best ways to fight against this phenomenon is a healthy diet that gives you all the micro-elements needed to maintain your body in good health. Microgreens can be a very easy way to help in this search of healthiness. A diet rich in plant-based foods of all kinds has been linked to a reduced risk of many health conditions, such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure.

What are microgreens?

Microgreens are tiny version of leafy vegetables or herbs which are harvested in its 2 leafy stage, typically 5 to 10 days after germination, when they only measure a few centimeters high. Microgreens are harvested at a very early stage compared to mature vegetables. The seeds and the cotyledons which are coming from them are really dense packages of nutrients. The cotyledons may contain the stored food reserves of the seed. These recently germinated seeds have all the nutrients that the small plants need to grow bigger, so we can say that microgreens actually are little nutrient explosions. They are considered as functional source of food by researchers.

Figure 2

Sprouts and microgreens: Are they same?

Sprouts are young wet seeds that start to grow, but don't have any leaves. Some call microgreens as cousins of sprouts.

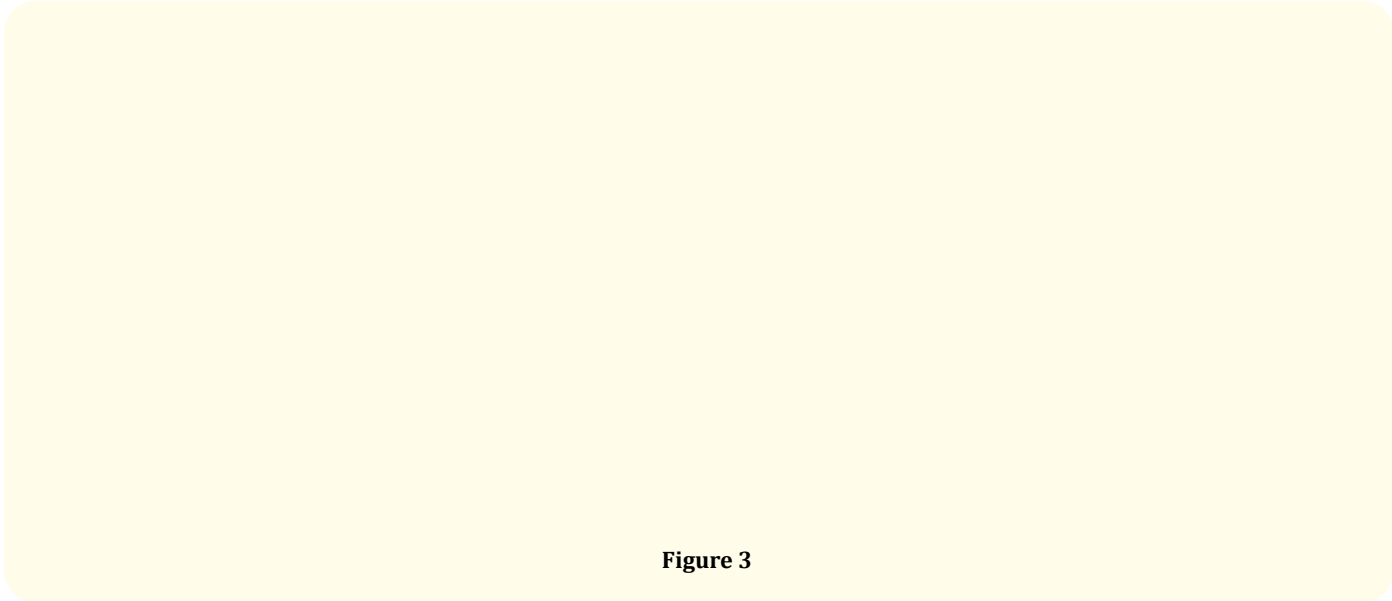


Figure 3

How to grow microgreens?

I tried all the 3 known methods of growing Microgreens in soil, tissue paper and water. The results show that the microgreens

grown in soil was ready to consume at its 5th day, those grown on tissue paper as well as water took some more day like 8 - 10 days.

My method of growing Microgreens: I'm here using 1day old sprouts instead of seeds for sowing

Different mediums of growing Microgreens		
Tissue paper	Soil	Hydroponics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a container/tray, 4 tissue papers. • Fold 3 tissue papers as it get fixed in the container. • Wet the tissues, make sure no water will be standing in the tray. • Spread the sprouted seeds, sprinkle some water on the top, you can use a sprayer. • Cover the sprouts with the 4th tissue paper and spray some water so the tissue is wet properly and moisture stays inside the container. • Close it can keep aside for 23days (no sunlight). • On 3rd day you can see the seeds germinated and small yellow color leaves out. Now remove the tissue • Keep it somewhere as it receives some sort of sunlight for further growth (top of your refrigerator, desktop, kitchen counter) • Water them daily. • Now, when they grew of 57 inches height, cut using a scissors and consume. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a container/tray, potting soil. • Spread the soil (1-2 inch height). • Spread the sprouts on the top of soil, spread some soil on the top (thin layer) 4. Water it using a sprayer. • Make sure to water daily. • I harvested horse gram and green gram on the 4th day. • Always use a scissors for cutting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take 2 containers, as one fits into the other. • Make some hole in one, (I used the forks to make • holes) • Fill water in the other as the base of 1st container touches. Make sure no water is entering the container kept on the top. • Wait to see the magical growth (7days) • Here you can consume the entire microgreen grown in the technique.

Figure 4

Stages-gallery

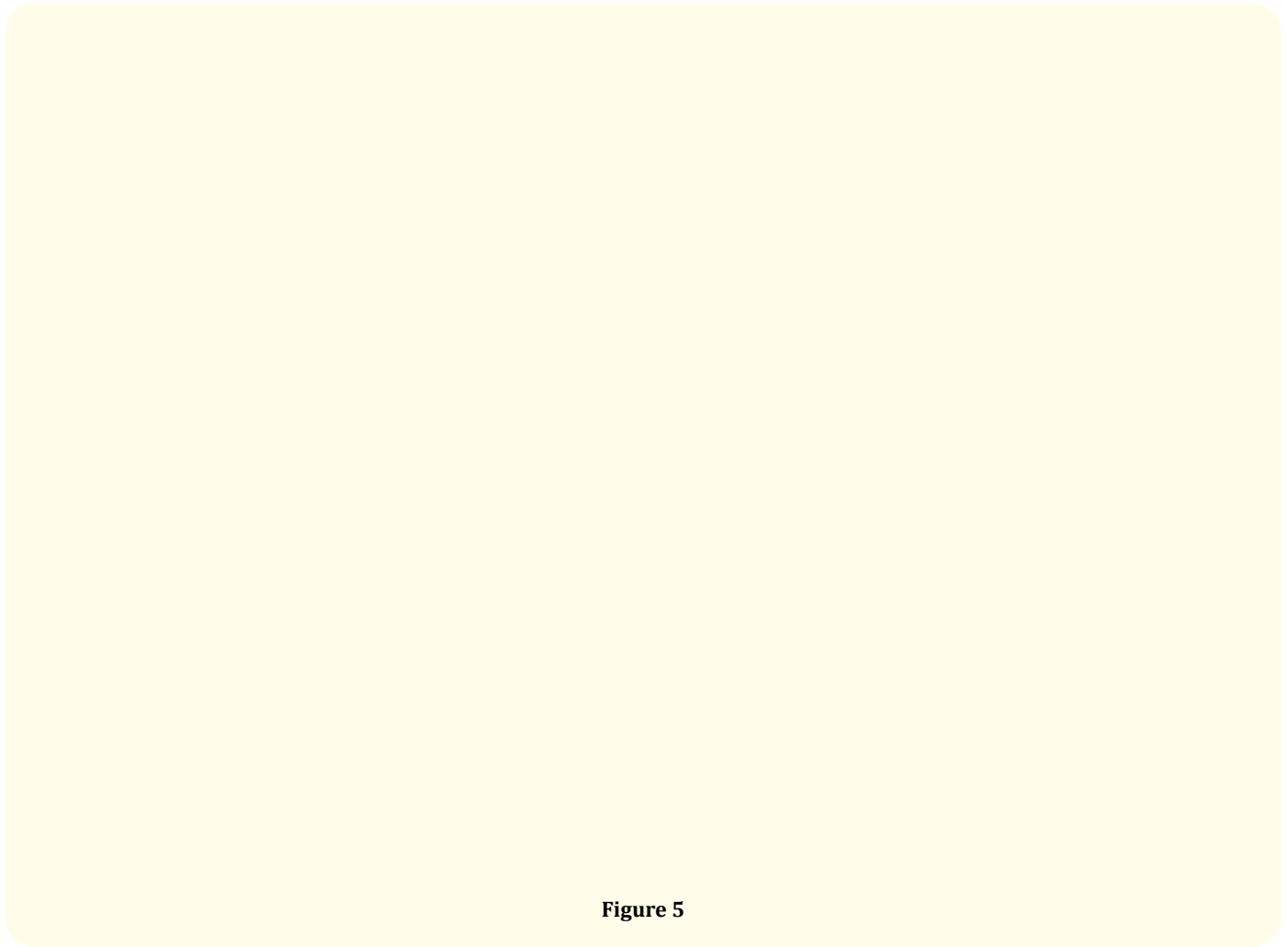


Figure 5

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