



Lettuce Facts

- Lettuce is a member of the sunflower family.
- Lettuce was first grown in ancient Egypt as long ago as 2680 BC.
- The Egyptians grew lettuce to harvest the seeds, not the leaves! They pressed the seeds to produce oil. Eventually, Egyptians also started eating lettuce leaves. The kind they grew for leaves grew about 30 inches tall!
- Lettuce even appears in ancient Egyptian paintings.
- The Egyptians passed on how to grow lettuce to the Greeks, who also passed it on to the Romans. The Greeks and Romans were the first to eat lettuce leaves with dressing—they invented salads!
- In Europe during medieval times, lettuce was used as a medicine.
- Several hundred years ago, many people ate their lettuce cooked because they thought that raw vegetables would make people sick and that only animals should eat raw food.
- Lettuce was first brought to the Americas by Christopher Columbus in 1493.
- Lettuce was grown in home gardens in colonial America.
- In the 1800s, restaurants in the United States and Europe started creating fancy salads and making them popular.
- Today, lettuce is grown and eaten all over the world.
- On average, Americans eat 30 pounds of lettuce every year.
- Lettuce is the second most popular vegetable in the United States.
- People in Georgia eat more than 285 million pounds of lettuce a year, but right now we grow less than one-tenth of 1% of that.
- If all the lettuce consumed by Georgians were produced and sold in the state, it would mean an additional \$83.6 million of direct revenue for farmers.
- Lettuce leaves that are darker in color contain more vitamins and minerals than paler varieties.
- The most important nutrients in lettuce are vitamin A and potassium. Lettuce also contains vitamin C, calcium, iron, and copper.
- The spine and ribs of lettuce provide dietary fiber, while vitamins and minerals are concentrated in the delicate leaf portions.



For more information, visit georgiaorganics.org/lettucetryit