

SUPER SALADS

FROM SEED TO SHELF

DID YOU KNOW?

GROWING

Most lettuce are grown from seed in trays and are kept in glasshouses for the first few weeks of their life.

Once a young plant has grown, the crop is then planted in the field. In about 6-11 weeks, depending on the time of year, the lettuce is then ready to harvest.

Baby leaf salad is sown straight into the field with a machine called a seed drill. One seed produces about 6-7 leaves and the seeds usually grow to the right size in 3-8 weeks, depending on the time of year. Lettuce and salad leaves are grown in the United Kingdom.

There are approximately 14,000 acres of salad farms stretching across the vale of Evesham, the South Coast, East Anglia, Lancashire, Lincolnshire and Hampshire.

The main season for growing outdoors is from April to November. Lettuce grown in a glasshouse can be produced all year.

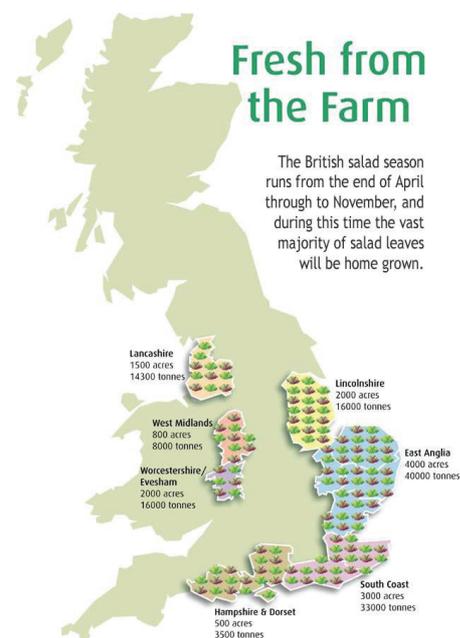
The climate in the United Kingdom is good for growing salad leaves. The plants do not like it too hot and grow best at a temperature of 12-18°C. This is why many producers are near the coast as the coastal breeze helps keep the temperature down.

Lettuces and leaves are very sensitive crops. They can easily be damaged by the weather, pests and diseases. Lettuce cannot be planted if it is too wet and if the conditions are too hot or cold.

Weather conditions are monitored closely. Temperature and moisture sensors are planted in the soil. Fleece blankets are placed over crops to protect them when conditions are particularly cold in the early spring.

Farmers have been working to make sure that farming salad crops is as efficient and environmentally friendly as possible. To help farmers new plants have been bred that:

- ✓ have a higher resistance to pests (like greenfly);
- ✓ are less likely to get diseases;
- ✓ can grow in poor weather conditions.



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