

Sprouting Seeds for Birds 2021

(what works for me)

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I feed about 1/3 of my bird's daily ration as sprouts (germinating seeds) and have tried most methods. I finally switched from sprouting sunflower hearts (which I had done for years) for my birds, because the sprout rates had become abysmal (Old? Previously frozen? Who knows?). I'm now doing a 2-day sprout with mung beans, wheat berries, and lentils—all of which sprout quickly. Fresh water only, NO soil and NO coconut coir substrate.

Briefly, I soak overnight, drain and rinse, put into a small sprouting container (covered) for the day, rinse evening and morning, then leave open under full spectrum light for the second day, rinse and put into a refrigerator container that evening, to feed the next two days. Repeat!

I use the small seed tray during non-breeding times, and the larger one for birds feeding babies and youngsters' first foods.

If you want to sprout smaller seeds, you can put a piece of fiberglass screen mesh on top of the tray mesh (tray holes are too big for the smaller seeds). I have tried this, but find that the smaller seeds don't have good yield and are not worth the trouble.

Following is my methodology. [NOTE: I think one of the reasons these sprout so quickly is because I have a heating pad set on low, and the soak jar and sprout trays sit on it.]

EVENING:

1. In the evening, put 1/4 cup mung beans, 1/8 cup wheat berries, and 1/8 cup green lentils [small sprouter amount] in a jar with very warm water and a few drops of bleach. Put jar on heating pad, cover with cloth overnight.

DAY 1 (morning and evening):

2. In the morning, pour into the size seed sprouting tray selected, rinse well under faucet (very warm water), put a small amount of warm water in the bottom of the sprout tray, place seed tray on top of lower tray, cover top with lid, put on heating pad with cloth over top (to shut out light).

3. In the evening, rinse well, including changing water in tray. Seeds will be germinating at this point, with tiny tips emerging from seeds, especially the mung beans, which also increase significantly in size.



Seeds into soaking jar



Morning after soaking all night



Beginning of first full day



End of first full day

DAY 2 (morning and evening):

4. Rinse the next morning, warm water in tray, put back on heating pad with lid off and full spectrum light over tray (to encourage production of chlorophyll). I usually mist a time or two during the day to be sure the seeds don't dry out. Their roots are to the water level in the base tray by now.

5. In the evening, rinse again, and pull sprouted seeds out of tray (most roots will pull back through the mesh) and put in covered refrigerator container for feeding the next 2 days.



Morning of second full day



End of second day

Mung & wheat berry sprouts ready to feed

ALSO, after washing the seed tray setup, fill with water and add a few drops of bleach to deter any mold or bacteria. Let set for 10 or 15 minutes, rinse all well and allow to dry overnight.

Start the cycle over again with seeds in soak jar.

DAY 4 & 5 (morning):

Dump sprouts into colander and rinse well, drain, and put half into morning food prep bowl, with the second half back in the refrigerator container for the next day.

If you wish to have more "green", you can add an extra day tray time under lights, and there will be beginning leaves on most of the sprouts.



Mung & wheat berry sprouts with extra day of "greening" under light



Sprouting tray after about 5 days for "greens"

If you wish to harvest actual "greens", you can add 3 to 4 extra days of sprout tray time (but watch for souring), with light on open container, rinsing morning and evening, and misting a time or two during the day, for 3 – 4" of leaves growing from seeds. You probably won't want to use the roots that have gone through the mesh to the water in the lower tray, as they are tougher and not as palatable—this is for "greens" only! My birds were not that thrilled when I offered these. They prefer the germinating seeds with tender tails.