



Zion Farmers Market KidCraft

Lettuce Stamps



This is a quick and easy way to make a print with just a head of lettuce. And since you would normally throw this away, it is almost free to make. This would make a great for a fun painting project. Have you tried creating art using simple **vegetable stamps**?

Supplies

- Paper
- Romaine Lettuce ends (the part you would normally compost)
- Paint ~ we used bright acrylic paint
- Paint Brushes
- Paper towels ~ optional

Tip: Leave the cut lettuce ends out over night to dry out. This will help you get a crisper print.

Instructions

Cut and save the ends of your lettuce bundles. Make as straight of a cut as possible.

Paint the cut end of your lettuce with thin layer of paint. Thick paint like tempera or acrylic work best

Press your stamp onto the paper using even pressure.

The sky is the limit with this DIY stamping project!

You can even add a little glitter or use 2-3 colors of paint to make one print. If you stamp them in bunches, it give it more of a *bouquet* feel.

This simple technique is perfect for create your own wrapping paper or special cards.



Lettuce Facts for Kids

What's your favourite lettuce? You know, we've been enjoyed for thousands of years. It's recorded that the kings of Persia were partial to us as long ago as 550 BC; the Father of Medicine, Hippocrates, sang our praises to his fellow Grecians; and Chaucer wrote about us in 1387 in the Prologue to his Canterbury Tales. So you see, we've a long and distinguished history - but more of that later.

First let me tell you about me and my family. One of the world's most popular salad vegetables, we come in many shapes, sizes and colours. There are four main types in Australia, all of which are widely grown. Let me introduce them to you.

Availability

We're available all year round.

Did you know?

- Iceberg lettuce got its name from the way it was shipped in the old train carriages that used to transport it to the markets. Since there was no refrigeration, ice was piled on the cartons of lettuce to keep it cold. When the train carriages were opened to unload the lettuce, they looked as if they were filled with 'icebergs'. That's the reason we now call it Iceberg lettuce.
- We're a member of the sunflower family.
- The darker the lettuce leaf the more nutritious it is.

Varieties

We're usually sold by variety.



Crisphead

We look like a small soccer ball, consisting of layers of folded, tightly packed, crisp, juicy leaves. The outer leaves are much darker than the inner ones which are pale greenish-white to almost white.

Our most popular type is the Iceberg lettuce (so called because it was always packed in ice). There are other varieties such as Imperial, Yatesdale and Target which can have reddish leaves or green or can have a plain or scalloped (or frilly) edge.

Butterhead

We have thinner, softer, floppy leaves with a delicate buttery flavour. Our heads are loose and can look a little like an open rose.



Varieties of butterhead range from pale to mid-green as well as an attractive reddish-brown. One of the most well-known butterheads is Bibb. It has lovely crisp, curly, red-purple to green leaves with a slightly tart taste.

Cos or Romaine

We go by both these names because the Romans discovered us on the Greek Island of Cos. We are a cylindrical lettuce with long, upright, narrow leaves and a crisp, sweet taste. Our leaves range from green to a dark red-brown, are crisper and coarser than the crisphead lettuces.



We're not sold by varieties. A smaller form (baby cos) is available as well as the normal size.

Looseleaf

We're a large group into which fall all lettuces that do not form heads. We're the most recent group and have a fantastic rainbow of colours. Our leaves appear loose and open and come in many shapes and sizes.



We're sold by variety, based on our leaf shape and colour. There are hundreds of us but some of the most popular varieties are:

Oakleaf

Our shape is similar to a rose and our reddish-brown to pale green leaves resemble the leaves of an oak tree. The leaves have a soft texture with a sweet, mild flavour.



Coral

We also form a loose frilly rose shape that can either be all green in colour or more coral in colour with a green centre with edges tinged with a reddish-brown. Our leaves are very tender and have a mild flavour.



Rocket

We have slender green leaves with saw-like edges and unlike most lettuce we have a strong mustard flavour. This is because we are related to the mustard family.



Frisee

We have a similar taste to the Iceberg but have loose, feathery, pencil thin leaves with a mild flavour. Our leaves are yellow at the bottom becoming bright green towards the top.



Red

We're slightly bitter in taste and have a loosely formed head with soft, elongated leaves that turn from yellow at the bottom, turning to reddish-brown on the top.





Radicchio

We're a member of the chicory family and look like a lettuce with a small head. Each of green with prominent white veins that have a slightly bitter taste.

Why Lettuce is Good To Eat

- We're about 95% water, so we're refreshing.
- We have some dietary fibre – cos lettuce has the most.
- Any varieties of lettuce with dark green leaves are a good source of beta carotene.
- We provide some vitamin C – especially cos and any of the frilly leaf varieties.
- Most varieties are a good source of folate (one of the B vitamins)

How Lettuce is Grown and Harvested

We're a rounded mass of leaves growing from short, central stems, either in soil or hydroponically (in water). We're harvested, when immature, by cutting the stem below our leaf mass.



Today, we're generally grown hydroponically in a nutrient solution. This allows the grower to have greater control so that we can be grown more quickly. Growing us this way is also beneficial for harvesting because as we're not on the ground those picking us do not need to bend down. Hydroponics also allows us to be grown year round.

Choosing Lettuce

Select those of us that have bright, crisp, tender leaves, free of brown spots, yellow leaves and decay. Iceberg lettuces should be firm and heavy for their size.

How to Keep Lettuce

Store us in the crisper section of the refrigerator in a plastic bag or store in a covered container. Wash just before using.

History of Lettuce

As explained earlier, we have an ancient past. It's thought that we were first cultivated in Egypt 6000 years ago. The ancient Greeks and Romans cultivated a cos-type lettuce; and records show that we were grown in China about 600 AD. The first reference to a head lettuce was in the 16th century. Where we modern lettuces came from is not known but we're thought to have originated from a wild lettuce in the temperate mountainous areas around south western Asia and the Middle East.

Three types of lettuce seed were brought out on the First Fleet ships to Australia in 1788 and were planted the same year in Sydney and on Norfolk Island. Most early records of vegetable production in the new colony have a reference to us.

Fun Ways to Eat and Cook Lettuce

No matter which lettuce you choose we are all great to eat. Cut out the core or stem if using the whole lettuce or just pull off as many leaves as you need. Use in sandwiches, salads, soups, with vegetables, as a garnish or simply use as an edible wrapper. We can be steamed, sauteed or microwaved until just tender.