Microgreens – green vegetables fresh from the box

Tipp von Esther Kern

Microgreens have been a trend in the USA for a few years now. With growing interest in urban agriculture, they are now taking over domestic plant boxes. The great thing: A little room can go a long way for growing your own vegetables.

Microgreens are a kind of a mature sprout. Instead of harvesting the little plants at the baby stage, they are allowed to grow up to two to four weeks and then the 15 to 25 centimetre shoots are harvested. This is possible with peas, sunflowers and beets, for example.

Pea shoots are a great vegetable. You can eat them raw in salads. Or you can also lightly sauté them with a bit of garlic and olive oil, like you would Erba Stella. Or even easier: Boil the pea shoots for a minute

together with pasta, then briefly swirl the pasta and pea shoots in some olive oil and garlic. In Asian cuisine where pea shoots are a staple, they are often quickly sautéed in a wok as a stir fry.

In Switzerland, it is still hard to find pea shoots to buy. But since 2016, organic farmer Klaus Böhler from Seuzach, Zurich has been cultivating this green power vegetable. A number of top chefs are already working with it. But he also caters to private customers. From about May to June, pea shoots can be either ordered from him in 500-gramme bags via post or collected (www.klausboehler.ch).

And for those with a garden, pea shoots can also be grown in a garden patch. When sowing, be sure to bury the seeds very deep in the ground. After a few weeks, harvest the shoots while leaving as many seedlings as you would need for conventional pea cultivation. This will essentially allow you to harvest peas twice in your garden. This process also works for a number of other microgreens.

If you'd like to know more, we recommend the book "Micro Greens – Micro Leaves" by Manuela Rüther (AT Verlag, approx. 28.90 Swiss francs, published at beginning of 2017). It describes how to cultivate these "new" vegetables and what to do with them.