

Janice Feuer Haugen, chef, food blogger, culinary coach and teacher. Author of five cookbooks including *Fruit-Sweet & Sugar-Free* and *Chocolate Decadence*. She shares her recipes and tips for living everyday healthy, everyday delicious in cooking classes and in her blog: [EverydayHealthyEverydayDelicious.com](http://EverydayHealthyEverydayDelicious.com).



# Sunflower Sprouts

NATURALLY DELICIOUS RECIPES • Janice Feuer-Haugen

## FRESH GREENS Throughout the Year!

It may still be winter here in Montana, yet newly harvested bright green sunflower sprouts top our salads, stuff our omelets and become our mid-afternoon snacks. All because of my green-thumbed husband, Paul. He's coaxing sunflower seeds on our kitchen counter to sprout. He's got rotating trays of sprouted sunflower seeds planted in vermiculite. Best of all, he's daily harvesting handfuls of these vibrant green sprouts growing in front of our south-facing patio door.

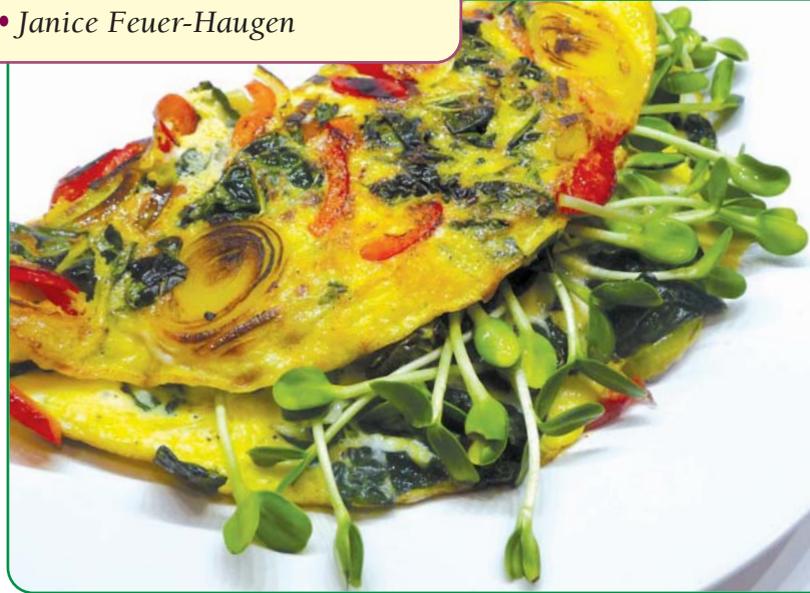
### Nutritional Powerhouses

All seeds are highly concentrated food. The nutrients concentrated within the sprouted sunflower seed are for a plant, given the right conditions, which can reach 6 to 20-feet tall with large, golden flowers and thousands of high protein seeds. Almost unfathomable the amount of vigor, drive and nutrients contained within each of these little black nutritional powerhouses to perform such a feat.

It takes the germination process to release and increase their nutrients and their bioavailability. During the germination process all nutrients, enzymes and trace minerals multiply 300 to 1200%. The sprouted sunflower seeds become a rich source of protein, essential fatty acids, minerals, fiber and vitamins A, B, D and E. They also contain abundant chlorophyll to help detoxify the blood and liver.

***“Sunflower sprouts are 30 times more nutritious than the best organic vegetables you can grow in the best organic soil in your yard.”***

—Dr. Joseph Mercola



Plus you can enjoy these deliciously crisp, flavorful and easy to grow in-your-own-home sunflower sprouts any time of year—even in the middle of winter.

### Gather your supplies & start sprouting!

1. The preferred sunflower seeds for sprouting are small black oil, organic sunflower seeds in their shells. Paul bought them in bulk from our local health food store.
2. A quart wide-mouth mason jar with a plastic sprouting lid.
3. Three 10-inch by 20-inch black plastic nursery trays: two with drain holes and one without. Paul bought these trays at a local nursery. We have two sets of them. Paul keeps both sets in use giving us a constant supply of sunflower sprouts.
4. Vermiculite, a soilless growing medium (available at local nurseries) with a great ability to retain water. Less messy than soil.
5. A liquid kelp fertilizer to provide trace minerals. The sunflower sprouts do not need nitrogen at this stage. Paul uses *Saltwater Farms SeaCom-PGR Organic Seaweed Concentrate*, although there are a number of options. Dilute the kelp with water according to the directions on your container.

6. A 1-quart plastic spray bottle for diluting the kelp and watering the sprouts.

## Paul's Step-by-Step Sunflower Sprouting

**Guide** for easily growing your own crisp, flavorful Sunflower Sprouts any time of year. The ultimate locally grown food.

### PRE-SPROUTING

Sunflower seeds must be soaked to soften their shell and begin the germination process.

1. Put 2 cups of sunflower seeds in a wide mouth quart mason jar topped with a screen lid. Fill the jar with 60–70 degree water. In order to keep the sunflower seeds submerged, have the water level right up to the screen lid.
2. Soak the seeds for 8 to 12 hours.
3. Drain off the soaking water. It contains nutrients and can be used for watering plants. Rinse the seeds thoroughly with 60–70 degree water. Drain off all the water.
4. Lay the jar on its side where it will not be disturbed. Preferably out of direct sunlight and at room temperature. Normal kitchen light is okay.
5. Rinse and drain again in 8–12 hours and then again in another 8–12 hours. The rinse and drain cycle continues until most of the seeds have sprouted, showing just a hint of a root. It's now time to plant.

### PLANTING & GROWING

1. A plastic nursery tray with holes, the "planting tray," is placed inside a tray without holes known as the "drip tray."



2. Add about 7 cups vermiculite to the planting tray to form a ½-inch deep bed.
3. Prepare a quart of kelp-enriched water following the directions on the kelp container. The 7 cups of vermiculite will hold approximately a quart of enriched water. You don't want more than a little water in the drip tray. Pour off any water that remains above the ridges of the drip tray.
4. Spread the sprouted sunflower seeds evenly on the thoroughly moistened vermiculite.
5. Cover the planting tray with the other nursery tray with holes. This keeps the light out and moisture in while allowing for air circulation.
6. Place the trays in a low-light room. Seventy degrees is optimal, though sunflower sprouts also grow well in both slightly cooler and slightly warmer temperatures.
7. Use your quart spray bottle to spray the seeds twice a day. Be sure to keep the seeds moist so they set their roots into the vermiculite. Later, when the sunflower sprouts are in the direct sun, your goal becomes keeping the vermiculite moist.

### GREENING YOUR SUNFLOWER SPROUTS

1. After 3–4 days, the sunflower sprouts begin to show leaves.
2. Once most of the sprouts begin growing leaves, move them to a well-lit location to receive direct sunlight.
3. To water the sprouts, place the kelp water into the drip tray. The vermiculite will absorb the water directly from the bottom drip tray.
4. Begin with 2 cups kelp water in the drip tray. Lift the planting tray to see how much water is left after 4, 8 and 12 hours. If the tray is dry add more water. If there is still water 24 hours later, then cut back the next time you water. Just leave as much water as the sprouts can drink in a day. Too much water can drown the plants

and/or lead to fungal or mold problems.

5. Alternatively, continue watering the sprouts from the top while still maintaining an eye on the drip tray.
6. Paul's sunflower sprouts sit in front of a southern exposure window. The cold coming through the window slows down their growth a little.



## HARVESTING, WASHING & STORING

1. Use a pair of sharp scissors to cut the sunflower sprouts just above the vermiculite when they are about 2–4 inches tall. For the best flavor, harvest sunflower sprouts just as their “true leaves” begin to appear from the center of their first two leaves.
2. Most of the sunflower sprouts shed their shells as their leaves open. However some shells remain stubbornly attached. Carefully peel off those shells.
3. Gently rinse the sprouts in a strainer. Enjoy them immediately or dry them and store in a plastic bag with a paper towel in the refrigerator for 3–5 days. ■



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