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Salanova Lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*)

Salanova is higher yielding than traditional salad mix even though it is grown as single heads, the same way that head lettuce is grown. Its unique core structure allows fully mature heads to be easily cut into uniform leaves, increasing harvest efficiency.

CULTURE

Lettuce is a cool-weather crop, preferring temperatures of 60–65°F/16–18°C, and so can be planted as early as the soil can be worked. It grows best in loose, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.2–6.8. Sow every 2–3 weeks for a successive harvest.

THERMAL DORMANCY

High temperatures may cause lettuce seed to enter thermal dormancy, a condition that precludes germination. All of our Salanova seed is pelleted, and has undergone a priming process to aid in breaking thermal dormancy. Irrigation can also assist in overcoming thermal dormancy by reducing the temperature of the soil through evapotranspiration, which draws heat from the soil as the moisture in it evaporates.

TRANSPLANTING

Starting seeds indoors is recommended, 3–4 weeks prior to transplanting. Sow 3–4 seeds per inch in a 20-row flat or 1–2 seeds per cell in 128-cell plug flats, 1/8" deep. To keep soil temperatures below 75°F/24°C, shade the flats on warm, sunny days.

If sown into 20-row flats, transplant the seedlings into 50- or 72-cell plug flats. If sown into 128-cell plug flats originally, thin to 1 seedling per cell.

Harden seedlings off by reducing water and temperatures 2–4 days before transplanting out. Seedlings are ready to transplant when they can be pulled out of the cell with a full rootball without the soil crumbling. When ready, transplant seedlings 6–8" apart in rows 18–24" apart.

DIRECT SEEDING

Direct seeding can be accomplished with a precision seeder. Sow in spring as soon as the soil can be worked, 3–4 seeds per foot, in rows 18–24" apart. Cover lightly with 1/8" of soil, firm gently, and keep the soil surface moist until germination process is complete. Pelleted seeds require adequate moisture in order to split or dissolve the pellet.

After seedlings have developed 2–3 sets of true leaves, thin to 6–8" apart.

HARVEST AND PREPARATION

Salanova can be harvested for presentation as whole heads or for the production of salad mix. One of the many advantages of Salanova is that the leaves are thicker and have greater loft than traditional salad mix, allowing them to better withstand washing and handling and have a longer shelf life.

To harvest as whole heads, cut the heads at the base in the same way as you would any head lettuce. If you intend to sell the heads, it is beneficial to explain to your customers how to release the leaves for salad mix.

The process for cutting heads into salad mix varies slightly between Salanova Cored types and Incised types.

Cored types. Harvest as whole heads, then use the Salanova Cutter Tool or a knife to release the leaves. Full instructions on how to use the Salanova Cutter Tool are included with each cutter.



Using the Salanova Cutter Tool to release the leaves of a cored-type Salanova head

Incised types. The whole heads can be harvested like the Cored types, but they can also be harvested as salad mix right in the field. Cut the heads slightly above the base to harvest with this method.



Harvesting using the whole-head method

MARKETING

Salanova is a uniquely versatile type of lettuce, offering multiple market opportunities. Listed below are a few of the many ways in which you can market your Salanova lettuce.



Salad Mix. Salanova is easily processed as salad mix. Sell prebagged or loose as a mix or by individual type.



Whole Heads. Sell as you would regular head lettuce, educating customers about the benefits of the unique growth habit.



Pairings. Combine whole or processed heads of different colors and leaf types.



Cases. Offer cases of heads to restaurants. Chefs will appreciate being able to store heads for preparation directly before serving.