Loose Sprouters

Loose sprouting: – where the sprouts are all mixed up and intertwined e.g. alfalfa.
Vertical sprouting: – where the sprouts grow vertically and you just eat the leaves e.g. Wheatgrass Snowpea.

About Loose Sprouters

Sprouters come in all shapes and sizes, but basically they are all variations on the humble colander. I guess you could break them into two types manual and mechanised. For mechanised sprouters there are basically two types those that spray/mist and those that pump up from a reservoir and then trickle down through the sprouts, we are not going to spend much time on them in this discussion because they are much more expensive and because of the regularity that you have to change the water and clean them they are not a time-saver at all, it is also very difficult to get rid of the seed husks and un-sprouted material, as you will never get 100% germination rate, meaning that you may be eating stuff that is already starting to decompose, anyway a quote from a famous American sprouting web site "We chose to keep our sprout growing a manual operation because we've never seen a machine that can come close to producing the same high quality sprout we can"

Manual Sprouters

Firstly let us consider the stages of sprouting basically there are four, 1:- Soaking 2:- Germinating 3:- Greening & de-husking and 4:- Storage. We have found that a fine grilled colander is the only one that performs all of these tasks's exceptionally well. Of course they will all work here are some strengths and weaknesses as experienced by myself.

Easy Sprout

Probably the best of the purpose built sprouters, a really well thought out design, the only place where the colander is superior is when it comes to price, de-husking & greening ie for some sprouts, like alfalfa, it really helps if you get rid of the seed husk if you want to keep them for very long, the wider bowl of the colander makes this easier to achieve, also when it comes to greening there is more surface area that is exposed to the light. Also this one costs about more is about 1ltr versus the 1.5Ltr colander, which you get two of for a lower price. Not to mention when you are not using them for sprouting you will find a host of other uses for them.

SproutMaster

The second picture, this is a tray type sprouter it is also a good design about the same size as the Easy Sprout but you get three 1ltr units for about the same price, does not come with the drainage bowl, and having a fine grid network of drainage holes makes it harder to clean then those with slotted drainage holes like the Easy Sprout and the Colander, it comes with a divider and you can stack units on top of each other. Soaking must be done separately, which is a bit of a nuisance because we like to soak with liquid seaweed, for at least 10 minutes each time we rinse.

Tube & Glass Jar

The Tube is a sophisticated jar, in that it is clear, but having holes at both ends makes it even easier to rinse and has better airflow than a glass jar, which has only one opening reducing aeration and trapping heat, it comes with different size lids which is very helpful but you have to find a place for it to drain. The insert is a picture of a jar with a perforated lid not quite as sophisticated as The Tube but it works in cool conditions.

Sprout Bag

The great advantage of sproutbags are their low-cost and they provide good cooling due to the evaporative effect of the back, the downsides is that it is not as useful for soaking in seaweed nutrient also doesn't allow you to get rid of the seed husks and not much chance for the seeds to go a little bit green, and you need a convenient place for it to drip after rinsing.

Multilevel Clear Plastic Sprouters

This is one type that I have not used, some people have told me that they've had problems with mould, being a closed system rigorous cleaning would be important. Also unless you're watering quite often with cool water then they may tend to overheat causing sprouts to go off, there are some similar ones that sprinkle water down automatically, but again you need to change this water quite regularly and also keep it cool in warm conditions and of course no chance of repetitive soaking in nutrient rich liquid seaweed, similar limitations for the spray type.

Colander - LivingApartment

Morning soak in Seaweed nutrient

Easy rinsing and husked removal

Stacking is required

Excellent drainage and aeration

If insects are a problem you can fit 2 inside the fine mesh bag

I have used most of the manual sprouters, they all work and I still have them, but this simple colander is the one I use now it's so simple, easy to clean, and when I'm not sprouting I'm using it for all those other uses you use a colander or spare bowl for.

The system that we use consists of either a 1.5L colanders with drainage bowl, it has fine slatted drainage holes, (fine enough for alfalfa once the alfalfa has been presoaked in the base container). You can see by the pictures that the process is pretty simple, for the 1st 3 days you use 1 colander and then when it becomes full divide it into 2 colanders, it is at this stage that you get rid of any un-sprouted material and seed husks. This is done in 3 ways, firstly you fill the colander with water before adding the seaweed, you will find that much of the discarded husk material has trapped small pockets of air, hence it floats, so gently moving your hand and creating waves will gently push them over the edge. The 2nd method gets rid of un-sprouted seeds & water logged husks that don't float, this is done by inverting the sprout mass each time you rinse, and temporarily placing it in the base of the colander, just tap the gril part of the colander against the edge of the sink and give it a light rinse and then replace the sprouts upside down, this also allows the underside to green up. You can also use a large colander at the end which has larger holes which the seed husks & un-sprouted seeds to pass through in the soak/rinse procedure.

In the morning I soak the seeds with a few drops of liquid seaweed while I have breakfast, then gently rinse them, then cover with a cotton towel or the germination cover, which comes with the kits, what could be simpler, the soaking in the liquid seaweed gives you a **more nutritious sprout** & in combination with the cover it also reduces rinsing to once per day.

When you have a mass of sprouting seeds together they can generate a certain amount of heat like a compost, this can prove a problem for sprouting in the warmer months or in hot climates so we have also developed a set of arms that allow you to raise the inner sprouting chamber which allows for greater air circulation and you get the good cooling mechanics as per the sprout bags but without any of the limitations, or after a bit draining take the inner container out & place on the sink or on a plate.

The final trick when you have nice clean sprouts is to make sure that they are not too wet, so after the final soak and rinse, I place them inside a fine mesh nylon bag, that is used to place delicates in the washing machine, I put this in the washing machine and put it on the spin dry cycle for a couple of minutes this gets rid of most of the moisture, I then hang it on an inside clothes rack in a cool spot for the rest of the day or overnight, doing the spin dry in the washing machine means it will not drip on the floor.
They are now ready to store inside a cotton tea towel or bag, which is placed inside a plastic container or bag in the fridge.