When to add plants

In this course, it is recommended to add plants to the system when the nitrate levels are at about 30 - 40ppm. At lower levels, there are not enough nutrients in the water to constantly sustain the plants. Plants added too early begin to yellow and suffer a slow growth rate and sometimes develop diseases.

Adding plants to a system is also a consideration during harvesting. It is recommended in this course to not remove all plants at once when harvesting, but rather to harvest when needed and make sure to replace the harvested plants with a new seedling. Removal of too many plants at once could result in a nitrate increase that could kill the fish.

The same advice applies to fish; after removing fish ensure to replace them with fingerlings or other fish as soon as possible. This practice will ensure the system is in constant production and is balanced. Removal of most of the fish might result in not enough nutrients for the plants.

Remember: aquaponics is about a balanced eco system.

What types of plants?

This simple question is one that many people in aquaponics tend to argue the most about. Basically, leafy green vegetables, vine plants, fruit and fruit trees, and some root vegetables can all grow in an aquaponics system. It just depends on the system. Below is a list of plants that thrive in aquaponics systems:

Simpson's Curled (Lettuce)

Oregon Sugar Pod (Peas)

Bloomsdale Savoy (Spinach)

White Bunching (Onion)

Tomato (Grosse Lisse)

Tomato (Beefsteak)

Rainbow Chard

Numerous tomato varieties
(the only tomato variety that hasn't grown well was pineapple)

Watercress

Chives (normal and garlic variety)

Celery

Cicoria Variegata

Capsicum (Californian wonder, Yolo wonder, Long sweet yellow)

Bok Choy

Broccoli

Rocket

Garlic

Sage

Yarrow

Cucumber (Lebanese)

Silver Beet (Giant Fordhook)

Lettuce (Cos)

Lettuce (All seasons)

Basil (Sweet green, purple, curly leaf and Thai)

Snow peas

Parsley (Flat leaf and curly leaf)

Yugoslavian watercress (also known as Lebanese watercress or Bulgarian watercress)

Chillies, many varieties

Kohl Rabi (Purple vienna)

Eggplant (Black beauty)

Cucumber (Burpless, Armenian)

Rockmelon

Cabbage

Mizuna

Coriander

Dwarf beans (Butter beans)

is I²S Lemongrass

Comfrey