

Denmark-specific, autumn-focused lettuce guide

You can use this Denmark-specific, autumn-focused lettuce guide (cool temps, short days, often cloudy) including exact sowing windows, step-by-step methods, spacing, frost protection, and optional grow-light and balcony-greenhouse tips.

Quick calendar (Denmark, coastal/mild to inland/cooler)

- **Late August → mid-September:** Best window to **sow for autumn harvests**. Start in modules/seed trays so seedlings establish fast and suffer less slug damage; transplant 3–4 weeks later. For a **winter/early-spring** pick, also sow a hardy/winter variety in **September–October** under cover. rhs.org.ukhavenyt.dk
 - **Transplanting: Mid-September → early October.** Plant out into beds/containers and cover on chilly nights; expect baby-leaf harvests through October–November under fleece/cloche. rhs.org.uk
 - **First frosts in Denmark:** Typically **late Oct–Nov** on the coasts, can be earlier inland—use row cover to bridge cold snaps. plantmaps.com
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Step-by-step (autumn crop)

1) Choose the right types

Prioritise **loose-leaf** and **butterhead** for fast “cut-and-come-again” harvests; consider hardy/winter sorts (e.g., ‘Winter Density’) for sowing Sep/Oct under cover for winter/early-spring picks. rhs.org.uk

2) Start seeds (late Aug–mid-Sep)

- **Containers & mix:** Use modules or 3–5 cm-deep trays with fine seed-starting mix.
- **Depth:** Sow **very shallow**—sprinkle and **barely cover** or press seeds into the surface. Many lettuces **need light to germinate**. Keep evenly moist. illinois

[Extension](#)

- **Temperature:** Germination is reliable in cool soil; **best around 13–24 °C** (55–75 °F). [Utah State University Extension](#)[Extension Resource Catalog](#)
- **Light indoors (if it's gloomy):** Give **14–16 h/day** on a timer. Distance: **fluorescent 10–15 cm** above seedlings; **LED ~20–30 cm** (adjust so seedlings stay compact, not leggy). [extension.iastate.edu](#)[extension.umn.edu](#)[extension.okstate.edu](#)

3) Harden off & transplant (mid-Sep → early Oct)

- **Harden off** 5–7 days (gradual outdoor exposure).
- **Spacing:** **Loose-leaf ~15 cm** between plants; **hearting types ~30 cm**. In troughs/planters, stagger plantings in two rows. [rhs.org.uk](#)
- **Soil & pH:** Moisture-retentive but free-draining soil (or peat-free compost in containers) with **pH ~6.0–6.5**; mix in compost for water holding. Raised beds/containers work well. [rhs.org.uk](#)[CAES Field Report](#)

4) Grow on through autumn

- **Watering:** Keep **evenly moist** (never waterlogged); containers dry faster. Morning watering is best. [rhs.org.uk](#)
- **Protection:** On forecast frost, cover with **floating row cover/fleece**. Heavyweight covers typically add **~2–4 °C** of protection (≈4–8 °F). Double layers over hoops help during cold snaps. [Wisconsin Horticultureextension.umd.edu](#)
- **Pests:** Slugs and snails are the main issue in damp weather—use barriers, traps, or hand-picking; keep beds tidy. [rhs.org.uk](#)

5) Harvest windows

- **Baby leaves:** **~4–8 weeks** after sowing (cool temps slow growth).
- **Heads/rosettes:** **10–14 weeks** depending on type and temperature. Harvest in the **morning** for crisper leaves; cut outer leaves repeatedly for “cut-and-come-again.” [rhs.org.uk](#)
- **Cold tolerance:** Well-hardened plants tolerate **light freezes**, but repeated subfreezing nights will damage them—use cover when nights dive below zero.

Balcony & small-space setup (works great in Denmark's autumn)

Containers

- Troughs or boxes **≥20 cm deep**; 30–40 cm wide makes two offset rows. Good drainage holes + saucers to avoid dripping on neighbours.
- Spacing as above (15 cm loose-leaf; 30 cm hearting). [rhs.org.uk](https://www.rhs.org.uk)

Mini-greenhouse / cold frame

- Place in the **brightest, least windy** spot. **Vent daily** to reduce humidity/mildew; close before cold nights.
- Keep **row cover** inside for fast frost protection and to stretch your season into **Nov/Dec** for baby leaves. Danish growers often overwinter small plants under **fiberdug** and harvest again in spring. karnamaj.dk/havenyt.dk

Supplemental light (optional, gloomy balconies)

- Run **14–16 h/day** on a timer. Start seedlings closer, then raise lights as plants grow. Use the distances above as a baseline and watch plant posture (compact = good; stretched = raise intensity/lower the light). extension.iastate.eduextension.umn.edu

If you're starting in September

1. **Sow now** (indoors or in a sheltered spot) a fast loose-leaf mix **and** a hardy type (e.g., 'Winter Density') for later. Keep trays cool/bright; **14–16 h** artificial light helps. [rhs.org.uk](https://www.rhs.org.uk)
2. **Transplant** around **late Sep/early Oct** at 15 cm (loose-leaf) or 30 cm (hearting). Mulch lightly to steady moisture. [rhs.org.uk](https://www.rhs.org.uk)

3. **Have fleece/row cover ready**—expect first light frosts late Oct/Nov near the coast (earlier inland). Use single or double layers on cold nights. [plantmaps.com/Wisconsin Horticulture](http://plantmaps.com/WisconsinHorticulture)
 4. **Harvest baby leaves** from late Oct into Nov under cover; overwinter the hardy planting for early-spring salads. rhs.org.uk
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Cheat-sheet (metrics)

- **Sow depth:** surface to **3–6 mm**; many seeds prefer **light** → don't bury. [Illinois Extension](http://IllinoisExtension)
- **Ideal germination:** cool range; best around **13–24 °C**; slows <10 °C. [Utah State University Extension](http://UtahStateUniversityExtension)
- **Spacing:** **15 cm** (loose-leaf), **30 cm** (hearting). rhs.org.uk
- **pH:** **6.0–6.5**; compost-rich, consistently moist soil/compost. [CAES Field Report](http://CAESFieldReport)
- **Frost cover:** adds **~2–4 °C** of protection; double up in hard snaps. [Wisconsin Horticulture](http://WisconsinHorticulture)
- **Grow lights:** **14–16 h/day**; distance **fluoro 10–15 cm**, **LED ~20–30 cm** (adjust to avoid legginess). extension.iastate.edu/extension.umn.edu

If you want, I can turn this into a **one-page printable** with a week-by-week checklist for your city (and include a tiny grow-light diagram for your balcony).