



*Figure 1 - Kratky grown basil. Left is mason jar with a plastic cover, right are water bottles covered with socks*

When the word hydroponics comes to mind, typically, one thinks of a greenhouse growing lettuce or a friend who has an elaborate setup in the basement. Maybe an all-in-one system comes to mind, like a tower. These systems are used worldwide, especially in commercial operations. Thankfully, Dr. Kratky at the University of Hawaii developed a method that requires no expensive equipment and no pumps. The vegetables will still be alive if the electricity goes out for days. He wanted something simple that could be built out of recycled materials.





The Kratky Method, as it is commonly known, uses a covered container with some type of net pot to suspend the seed or plant in a nutrient solution. The solution has all the nutrition the plant needs, along with oxygen. The following two videos explain how it works.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZZO1tYqcwk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5z0NaYpVHM5>

How does Greentown Grows Kratky? With mason jars! The following short video shows how simple and easy it is to grow in mason jars. The best part about using net pots with clay pebbles is the ability to clean and sterilize them repeatedly. Once the initial investment is made, the materials can be reused indefinitely.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGOBRiNFJqU&t=1s>

Happy Leaf's website and new book are the best way to learn about hydroponics.

<https://happyleafed.com/>

<https://happyleafed.com/grow-lettuce-in-your-living-room/>

Linda, Greentown Grows' director, currently owns 5 Happy Leaf lights and feels these are some of the best on the market. They were developed and built by an MIT engineer to meet his requirements for maximum light using the least amount of energy possible. These lights stay cool enough to be touched, even after being on for hours, and operate for pennies a day. *Greentown Grows does not receive any commission or compensation from the company.*

Wisconsin Garden Expo 2022



Grow in buckets



dwarf tomato under a light



mason jar salad greens and herbs

The method is versatile. Whether the space is a small countertop or a large rack, growing vegetables indoors is easy and very little work with the Kratky Method. Happy growing!