



“GARDENING” WITHIN MY SCREENED-IN LANAI/ POOL DECK® by Dan Pemble, Kissimmee, Florida – November 20, 2024(Revised 10/2/2026)

As just one of my hobbies I have found to while-away some time in my leisure years, I have enjoyed experimenting with growing various plants in pots in the confines of my screened-in lanai/pool deck. To date I have grown lemons, limes, Meyer lemons, jalapenos, several types of tomatoes, rosemary, numerous herbs, and aloe vera - all from plants I have purchased. I have also successfully grown pink grape fruit and lemon plants from seeds from the fruit I have eaten (although without grafting, these would probably never produce fruit). Additionally, I have nurtured East-Indian holy basil (tulsi) and curry plants from starters donated to me by a neighbor. Looking ahead, I’m always thinking about what else I should try to grow!

Most recently I wanted to try growing some iceberg lettuce in pots, so I ordered some seeds; after the fact, I did some research and found that growing iceberg lettuce in Florida is quite difficult for various reasons. However, not to be disappointed in this fact, but instead determined to accept the associated challenges, I charged ahead and planted some seeds on October 13, 2024. Later on, as some seedlings emerged, I picked the healthiest of 12 and re-planted each of them in small pots. The following photo shows these 12 plants on November 19, 2024 – 37 days after I first planted the seeds.



Even though these plants are quite “leggy” and fragile, they are at the stage where they need to have a final replanting in individual minimum 10-inch-diameter pots. So today, November 20, I re-planted the very first one to see how it would do over the next week or so. Normally, under ideal conditions, full maturity takes about 80 days. So, was I successful? YES! The final result was several healthy semi-firm heads of iceberg lettuce all of which were thoroughly enjoyed in fresh salads! Since this experiment, I have also had similar success in growing some crispy romaine lettuce in patio pots!

