



Kevin Milaeger

# Milaeger's

## Ready...set...GROW!

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**Things were kind of busy here last fall**, and I never got around to tackling the final garden cleanup. Fortunately, we had some mild weather earlier this March, so I was able to take care of those chores well before spring planting time. I much prefer doing it in the fall---it's kind of embarrassing to look at garden refuse all winter, especially when you know the cleanup only takes a couple of hours. At our garden, the recent streak of dry weather was very welcome. After the cleanup, it allowed us to get in and do the rototilling, which is often a messy, muddy job at this time of year. Now the garden is ready for planting. After April 1, the average night time low temperature creeps above freezing for the first time, so that is cause for optimism.



Since the plants in our ["Greens to Grow"](#) program are now ready, I'll start planting them this week. These greens are all cold tolerant, but if we get record lows, I will cover them. They might pout a bit, but they'll make it. I checked the soil temp on March 23 and it was about 38 degrees (there were patches of snow.) Today the soil temperature is just over 56, and will rise this week, I believe. Usually I put in the starter plants when we are expecting at least a few days of mild weather (night air temps in the thirties or higher). That way the plants can get settled before another spring chill sets in. I'm going to plant five or six kinds of lettuce and a couple types of kale. Our spinach crop is a little behind, so that will have to wait a bit. From seed, I will put in a few kinds of radishes, and some beets. From sets, I'll plant the first of several groups of onions.

I've been tending a few of our ["edibowls"](#) at home for more than two weeks now. These low bowls are growing lushly, with a wide assortment of

greens. Every evening when I make the salad of the day, I just step outside and snip off what I need---a little of this, a little of that. It's not quite like harvesting from the garden, but its way better than pulling the greens out of a plastic bag. We've had a few cool nights, but I have left the bowls out every night that the predicted low was above 30 degrees. These greens prefer cool temperatures; for the Greens to Grow and Edibowls projects we



**About "Greens to Grow" and "Edi-bowls"**

selected varieties that thrive in that kind of weather. Munching away on these tasty greens makes me that much more anxious about getting started in the garden. Yum.

I've been trialing different varieties of sugar snap peas for a number of years. Those are the kind where you generally eat both the peas and the pod. Very sweet. I eat most of them right off the vine. Sugar snap peas can be grown either as a small vine, or as a small bush, depending on the



**What's more fun than doing a project with your son?**

variety. I've always grown the vine type, but this year I'm going to try some of each. I just finished putting up a new support system-- -a little taller and sturdier than in previous years. The vines usually get 5-6' tall so you need a pretty tall fence. However, the vines don't weigh all that much due to the small fruit size (unlike, say, cucumbers) so it doesn't have to be an extra strong support system, unless it is a really long row. Our garden is about 25' long. I have three heavy metal stakes, pounded in the ground a foot or so; then I put some wire mesh from one end to the other, and fastened the mesh to the three stakes with zip-ties. Some folks use chicken wire instead of mesh, but I like to be able

to reach through the fence at harvest time. You can plant peas pretty much any time after the soil is workable, but the seed won't all germinate until the soil warms up. Ideal soil temperature for germination of peas is 70 degrees, but some will start to sprout well below that. Now that I've started planting, my spirits are lifted along with the rising temperatures.

Please email me ([kevin@milaegers.com](mailto:kevin@milaegers.com)) if you have any questions or comments.