



Kevin Milaeger

Milaeger's

Making Salad Interesting!

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I just finished clipping back the "Greens to Grow" starter plants in our greenhouses. We've sold quite a few of them but we still have a full selection. Of course, in our greenhouses, they keep on growing and can easily get too big, so the clipping is necessary. As I was tending to the fourteen kinds of lettuce in the program, I nibbled a little on most every variety. The range of flavor was greater than you might expect. Being young plants, most of them have a rather sweet flavor, as opposed to bitter, which is sometimes a characteristic of older plants. After you chew on a sweet leaf, if the next leaf is not so sweet, it can seem a little bitter. When the ancients ate greens, they would counter this bitterness with generous quantities of salt--this was thousands of years before salad dressing was invented. Salt



14 kinds of lettuce

was such an integral additive to the many greens that made up their diet that the greens based concoction was eventually called "salad"---the word "salad" is derived from the word "salt."



Mustard 'Scarlet Frills'

wonderful color to a salad (or any dish you might be serving). The color is enhanced with direct sunlight, so if you are growing in less than full sun the color of your plants will be less intense. Also, the younger leaves that are under the mature leaves won't begin to color up until the bigger leaves are harvested, exposing the younger leaves to



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Store & Cafe Hours

Monday 9am-6pm
Tuesday 9am-6pm
Wednesday 9am-6pm
Thursday 9am-8pm
Taco Thursday 12-8
Friday 9am-6pm
Saturday 9am-6pm
Sunday 9:30am-5pm



direct light. The highly nutritious kale is another flavor dimension to consider adding. Some folks like to make an entire salad of kale, but I like just a smidgen of young leaves. If you let the leaves get too large they can sometimes become bitter. Later this spring we will be offering the magnificent dinosaur kale for the first time. You'll find it in our vegetable display beginning in late April.



Mustard 'Red Rain'

Another curious flavor is Chinese cabbage; we offer a variety called 'Rubicon.' (The texture and taste of 'Rubicon' is more like lettuce than cabbage.) Lastly, we have two kinds of arugula; each has its own special taste identity. All of these I use only in very small amounts, just enough to make you tilt your head as they settle on your tongue.



Kale 'Red Ursa'

At my house, the ritual of making the evening salad is something I rather enjoy. To keep it interesting, I try to use as many components as possible. I almost never have less than ten ingredients, and at this time of year I count the greens as one ingredient, even though it is composed of many types of greens. Along with the greens I include the following: sweet red pepper, sweet onion, radish, celery, carrot, mini cucumber, cilantro, pomegranate (when I can get it), and several

kinds and colors of salad tomatoes (golf ball size or smaller.) Microgreens have also become an important part of the daily salad for me. At

Milaeger's we are now growing eight kinds. Some are rather sweet, like peas and sunflowers; some are tangy, such as the radishes and mustard greens.

(Many folks who have tried the microgreens return to Milaeger's weekly to stock up. We also offer a class in growing microgreens in your home.)

After those ingredients are chopped and mixed, I add a little cheese, and either sliced green olives or avocado, and sometimes both. Sometimes I top it off with grilled salmon or chicken. Such has been my routine for some years now. I call it a routine, but with the seasonal variation of ingredients, it hasn't become boring, at least not for me. Oh, and one more thing---add a touch of fresh ground sea salt, for authenticity.



Chinese Cabbage 'Rubicon'

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



