



Milaeger's

Greens to Grow---March Update!

Kevin Milaeger

Now that March is here the sun is noticeably higher, and we are reminded that spring will be here soon---at least that's what we keep telling ourselves as we put on our gloves and tie our scarves. In the greenhouses at Milaeger's, we can definitely see spring coming---a careful observer can see the plants changing daily. The "Greens to Grow" project at Milaeger's is coming along nicely too, and I thought you'd like to have an update. If you want background on this project, [click here](#) for my previous blog.

We sowed the seeds for the first batch of edible greens back on January 16. The plants sprouted quickly. We transplanted the seedlings, and later moved them into a cool greenhouse. They get plenty of light but the high temperature limit is 66 degrees, so plant growth is slow, and the leaves are strong, compact, and not floppy. We'll cool them down even more in the coming weeks. That way they'll be sufficiently "hardened off" to survive the outdoor temperatures. This is what they look like now.



This is the first time we've grown a crop of early greens. Some varieties have gotten fairly large---maybe we started too early or grew them too warm, but they need a haircut. We cut back about eight varieties---here is a photo of the cut greens. Of course we couldn't let them go to waste---they found their way to my kitchen table, and the first reviews are excellent.

Here is a [link](#) to a chart that shows what greens we are growing, and the approximate dates that they could be planted outdoors. These leafy vegetables were specially chosen by us for their ability to withstand chilly early spring temperatures. But that doesn't mean they will tolerate absolutely anything. Our average last frost date is April 27. For these frost tolerant plants, we generally work back from that date to determine when it is expected to be reasonably safe to plant. For example, most of the lettuces can be planted 3-4 weeks before that average last frost date. If we are in the middle of a cold snap at that date, or if we are expecting one soon, then wait to plant them until the weather is more promising.



Dave Milaeger with Deer Tongue Lettuce



I was telling my mom (Joan Milaeger) about our "Greens to Go" project and she began reminiscing about her childhood home in Sister Bay, Wisconsin (Door County.) She talked about how her grandfather came to live with them after his wife died, and about how he created

and tended a huge garden so he could "earn his keep." Here is a photo of Charlie Erickson's garden, circa 1935---I thought you might like to see it.

Please feel free to [email](#) me with any questions or comments.