



Kevin Milaeger

Milaeger's

Pity the Poor Hornworm? Maybe not.

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We all have troubles from time to time, but they are probably much less disturbing than those of the tomato hornworm that appeared in my garden recently. Although it has a voracious appetite for tomato leaves and fruit, the hornworm is otherwise harmless, and it eventually changes into a beautiful hawk moth. (I usually pick the hornworms off my plants, and put them on unwanted "volunteer" tomato plants.) In the photo you can see the trouble that has doomed this particular hornworm. On the hornworm's back is a cluster of white eggs, laid by a parasitic wasp. When they hatch, the young wasps devour the hornworm. A slow, no doubt painful, death. This is the way nature works, but it's sometimes uncomfortable to watch. Your first inclination might be to intercede and rescue the hornworm from the wasps. But then you would be saving the hornworm and killing the wasps. I'm not exactly sure how the wasps fit into the great chain of life, but they will probably pollinate some flowers, and some wasps will become food for songbirds. Best to let nature take its course. Who are we to interfere with all of that?



Hornworm with wasp eggs



**Peppers from left to right:
Carmen, Big Bertha (beginning to ripen), King Arthur**

On a more cheerful note, the pepper evaluation project is progressing

nicely. The garden weeds have become a nuisance, but the pepper plants



**our final crop of G2G
planted this week**

don't seem to mind. In the bell pepper category, the most impressive is 'King Arthur.' It is the largest, with a blocky shape---probably the best for stuffing. 'California Wonder' has been a very good seller over the years, but they were considerably smaller than others in the trial. We hear that there is now an improved strain of 'California Wonder', and we hope to have it for 2017. Another popular bell is 'Red Knight.' It is a good seller, maybe because of the word "red" in the name, and the fact that the picture tag shows a red pepper. Maybe all bell pepper labels should picture both a green and a red pepper, since all green bell peppers turn red when they are fully ripe. In this year's trial, 'Red Knight' produced small

fruit. That might be desirable for some folks, but I was disappointed. 'Carmen' is the largest of the bullhorn types this year, and it's beautiful too. Of all the varieties, there doesn't seem to be an obvious winner in terms of production, but 'Big Bertha,' an elongated bell pepper, is one of the heaviest bearers.

Our fall "Greens to Grow" plants are doing very well. They will be ready for sale by the first weekend in September. We have about a dozen varieties including lettuce, kale, spinach, chard, broccoli, and more. These are young plants that you can plant out and start to harvest the greens a few weeks later; the broccoli needs more time. You should be able to harvest these greens into November, depending on the weather. I just planted some lettuce today (September 1), and I plan to harvest it in time for Tomatomania---we're going to use it on our "Gourmet BLT" mini sandwiches.



**Kevin Milaeger watering
newly planted lettuce**

Tomatomania 2016 is fast approaching. Saturday, September 10 is the date this year. Our store is open from 9-7 that day, but the event is from 11-3.



Tomatomania

This free tomato and pepper tasting is always a fun event---complete with live music! Remember, the tasting is free, but you will need to purchase tickets if you'd like to sample any of the delicious tomato based treats that we will be preparing on site. Many of you have visited our Sunday Farmer's Market, which operates year 'round. Some of our market vendors have asked to sell their

produce at Tomatomania, so this year a limited number of them will be setting up their displays. Everyone has fun at Tomatomania!