



**Kevin Milaeger**

*Milaeger's*

## **It's Time to Plant Onions**

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**You can plant onions** any time now. You could have done so a few weeks ago but I don't think they would have grown much, with the cool weather we had. This week I put in set onions and leek transplants. If you recall, I planted the leek seed in the greenhouse in late January, and transplanted them to individual "cells" a month later. Now I have a head start when I put them in the garden. Leeks are a long season crop; harvest for these will begin in early September. Onion sets look like miniature onions, about the size of a marble. They will grow into big round onions, but they can be eaten before they reach that size, if you prefer. Full size will be reached no earlier than mid-summer. When the green stalks turn brownish in summer, it's time to pull them out of the ground, as their growing will have stopped.



**leeks ready for planting**

Egyptian walking onions, being perennial, are already in active growth. (I didn't dig them up when they matured last year.) They are already over 24"



**Egyptian onions ready for sale**

tall in late April. I raked up the clusters of bulbils (marble-sized onions) from last year that were scattered around the plants. If I had left them, they would have rooted in, creating new plants. Instead, I gathered them up, potted them, and they are now ready for sale. I've been doing this for the last ten years or so. Egyptian onions are entirely edible, but I like growing them because they are wonderful garden curiosities. For more

information on Egyptian onions [click here](#).

We are offering Potato Onions again this year. It's been at least five years since we last had them. Like the Egyptian onion, they are perennial. If left unharvested, they will sprout again the



following year. Occasionally these perennial onions push up from "frost heave", leaving them partially exposed--if that happens you need to dig them up and replant them. No big deal. While the Egyptian onion produces clusters of bulbils, the potato onion has flowers for reproduction. Remove the flowers if you are serious about onion production; I leave them on because I like the way they look. Potato onions are produced in clusters, not unlike regular potatoes. That is their only connection to potatoes. When harvested, they are on the small side, 1-2" in diameter. When I harvest them, I put a couple back in the ground, for the next year.



**potato onion ready to bloom**

This is a great time to harvest ramps, the local wild onion. The mild tasting ramps are eaten like scallions, and are often served in trendy restaurants in spring. They grow in wooded areas all around our area. It is illegal to dig



**wild ramps**

them on public property, but if you know someone who has some woods, you can maybe get permission to harvest from them. Sometimes you will find a large colony of them----hundreds of clumps. A clump can be quite large---fifteen or more stalks. They are shallow rooted and can be dug up easily.

When I harvest them, I take a small portion of the colony, so that there is always more the next year. You can also transplant some onto your own property.