



Kevin Milaeger

Milaeger's

2015---Not the Year of the Pepper!

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It's normal to have a few issues in the garden. Every year it's some new problem, it seems---we kind of expect it. Recently I heard a customer say "I'm never growing peppers again!" Gardeners are optimistic by nature, so the idea of giving up is unusual and kind of distressing.

By most accounts, this was not a good year for peppers. I think the cool June got things off to a bad start. This should remind us that we must wait until June to plant peppers, and then only if the forecast is favorable. You need a good, strong start if you expect great results. An experienced friend of mine has had his ups and downs with peppers over the years. His solution: plant lots of them. If the yield is low, you'll still have plenty of fruit. If the yield is high, you will have even more to give to friends.

That works for me, provided you get your plants at Milaeger's.



'Born to Be Mild' (3) & 'Fooled You' (1) peppers

This year I grew a new "no-heat" jalapeno pepper called 'Born to be Mild.' It looks like a typical jalapeno. I've eaten an entire



mixed gourds

pepper, seeds and all (that's where the most intense heat is, if there is any), and I can verify there is no heat. It tasted sweet, and it looks great. But I prefer another "no-heat" variety that we have been growing for a number of years--- 'Fooled You Jalapeno.' It has a more intense jalapeno flavor, also sans heat. In addition, the pepper walls are much thicker, so they are better for stuffing and grilling. I guess you could say that the 'Fooled You' is not quite as pretty, because the skin crazes, but that doesn't bother me. In the end, it's flavor that counts.

We had some extra space in the garden this year so we decided to try growing some gourds. We chose some mixed gourd seed, and a wonderful mix is what we got. We planted them very late, which turned out to be fortunate. Like peppers, gourds like it hot. But the cool June weather didn't bother them because we didn't plant the

seed until after Fourth of July! I was afraid it was too late, but we picked our first

gourds around mid-September. Many of the plants look pretty shabby now, but the unpicked gourds that remain on the vines still look terrific.

It's time to harvest the first Brussels sprouts. I planted them on April 15th. They could have been harvested as early as a few weeks ago, but they are still in fine shape, and will be for weeks. I plan on grilling them along with some whitefish that I bought in Bailey's Harbor last weekend. They are easy to grill--the only ingredients are olive oil, sea salt, and fresh ground pepper.



**harvesting Brussels sprouts
click for video**

My raspberries are doing really well this fall. This year there have been fewer problems with Japanese beetles---in previous years I found lots of them devouring both leaves and fruit. The only pest I've seen on the berries this year is wasps---

at least that's what I think they are. They seem to love the sweet fruit, and actually eat quite a lot. I haven't tried to control them with spraying, but if were raising berries for a living I'd have to do something. They seem to be intent on the fruit; they haven't bothered me even when I am picking fruit an inch or so from them. The raspberry variety I am growing is 'Heritage.' It bears in June, and again in fall. This year my fall crop seems to be exceeding the June crop. My raspberry patch is only about 10 x 15 feet, and it produces about a cereal bowlful every few days (despite the wasps.) Sweet autumn berries---Yum!



Raspberry 'Heritage'

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

