



Kevin Milaeger

Milaeger's

Midsummer Garden Notes

The vegetable garden is coming along nicely and I think we're having a pretty good year. There are issues, of course. I had more blossom end rot than I originally thought, but it's much better than last year. The large red tomatoes have been ripening non-stop for over three weeks now, and the cherry tomatoes started before that. I've picked a few peppers, and the 'Fooled You' jalapeños are now turning red. They're heatless peppers, but they retain the jalapeño flavor. For my palate, they pair well with Gouda or white cheddar.



'Classic Beefsteak'

I didn't plant any large bell peppers this year, but I'm growing some other peppers from our "Vintage Veggie" collection, just for fun. I planted all my pepper plants the first week of June. The hot pepper plants looked good, and then they didn't. The leaves were distorted, and I suspected a virus. But they kept on growing and the new leaves looked better. Flowering was delayed. Some fruit finally set, but it was minimal. The plants continue to bloom. Hot peppers require a long growing season. I hope this one is long enough to get



a decent crop. 'Fatali' is the name of the hot pepper in my garden. It will have small, bright yellow fruit, with a Scoville rating of about 250k. That's about 100 times hotter than many jalapeño peppers. Way too hot for me, but not nearly as hot as 'Carolina Reaper.' The hot peppers are all beautiful, especially after the fruit changes color, and that's why I grow them.

The cucumbers have been really prolific. I'm growing 'Mini Munch,' a small fruited

**peppers from left to right:
'Jimmy Nardello,' 'Vinedale,' 'Giant
Marconi,' 'Fooled You,' and 'Hot Sunset'**

while, and some got too fat and had to be discarded. One day I picked over thirty cukes, and two days later I picked another seventeen. And I only have two plants! All of them were the perfect size, and I gave most of them away—too many for us to eat. This variety is parthenocarpic which means the flowers are all female. 'Mini Munch' is also known for its thin skin, so it doesn't need peeling. Even my three year old granddaughter loves snacking on them. She likes the cherry tomatoes too.

I'm clearing out an area for the fall lettuces and other greens. At Milaeger's we'll have the young plants available on September 1st, maybe even a few days earlier. They'll grow fast during the last warm days of summer, and we're

usually able to start harvesting the outer leaves of some varieties within two weeks of planting. Remember to keep them well watered. They will taste much better and grow faster if you are vigilant about watering. I've been craving fresh, home grown greens since my spring lettuces were finished in



cucumber 'Mini Munch' (overgrown)

event, with plenty of tomato enthusiasts to share stories with. Fingers crossed for next year.

type. They should be picked when about 4" long, and before they get fat. I was away from the garden for a

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cucumber 'Mini Munch'

early July. Home grown greens are so much tastier than store bought. More gratifying, too. Along with the many lettuces, we'll also have kale, spinach, and other greens.

As you might expect, there will be no Tomatomania this year. At that event there is so much tasting going on, it simply can't be done safely during the pandemic. We are as disappointed as all of you tomato lovers. It's always a fun social