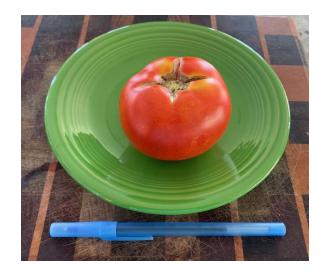# *End of August Garden*

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Every spring I review how important it is to plant at the correct time. We're all anxious to start planting, but its wise to plant the hardier things first, and wait until at least late May for the more tender vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, squash, cucumbers, and eggplant. To prove my point, this year I planted a 'Wisconsin 55' tomato plant on May 3rd. Way too early, to my mind. But the weather at that time was mild, and I was doing it to confirm my opinion. I planted another of the same variety on May 31st. I postulated that the later planting would produce fruit at the same time as the earlier one. I was wrong. This time. Turns out the weather for most of May was not bad, milder than most years. The result was the plant that was planted 27 days earlier bore fruit one week earlier than the later plant. Now, not every May is as favorable weather-wise as this year. So I maintain my opinion that a later planting is better, at least for most years. But, I might be tempted to plant an early plant or two next year, just to try and prove my point again. (I hate being wrong!) I think two mild Mays in a row is unlikely.

Wisconsin 55

**Determinate (L),
Indeterminate (R)**

This year I planted a determinate (bush) tomato next to an indeterminate (vine) tomato. Most of you know the difference, but above is a photo of the two plants which plainly illustrates the differences. The determinate plant, on the left, grew to nearly 24" tall, bore flowers, and then stopped growing and didn't produce any more flowers. The result is that it bore a lot of fruit, more or less all at once, and then stopped bearing, for the most part. On the right is an indeterminate variety. Its over 6' tall and hasn't stopped growing or flowering. It should bear fruit for some time yet. I've been harvesting fruit off it right along, so there isn't much ripe fruit on it right now, but I've probably picked fifteen big tomatoes so far.

Mini Munch

Unagi

My cucumbers have been bearing heavily for some time now. Most folks plant traditional varieties but I prefer parthenocarpic types. They only produce female flowers, so they bear earlier. I can't tell you how many customers ask me why, early in the season, they get so many flowers on their cucumber plant, but no fruit. Experienced gardeners know to expect this, but folks new to gardening are frustrated by it. Seed of parthenocarpic cukes is more expensive, but worth it in my book. I've never seen parthenocarpic seed offered on seed racks. You'll have to order it, or buy plants that we offer. This year I've got five parthenocarpic 'Mini Munch' plants, and they have borne over 200 fruit so far. They're best picked at 4-5". I'm also growing a Japanese variety called 'Unagi' and it, too, is parthenocarpic. It doesn't bear as heavily as Mini Munch' but I'm happy with it. The slender fruit is about 10" long. Like 'Mini Munch', the skin is thin so you don't have to peel it. To keep any cucumber variety producing, its important to keep harvesting the fruit, even if you can't use it. You don't want the plant "thinking" that it has

produced seed to reproduce itself, and then stop producing more fruit. Picking the fruit keeps that from happening.

Kale 'Prizm'

Greens to Grow

Now is the time to plant your fall greens. We have starter plants ready for you. Put them in the ground now and you'll be harvesting in a couple weeks. All you need to do is water regularly, and fertilize. We've got a big selection of varieties. I always recommend planting a broad selection because they grow and mature at different rates. With more varieties you'll have a constant supply of greens probably up into November. I love quickly passing through the lettuce department at the grocery store, knowing I've got an even bigger selection at home. It tastes so much better when freshly picked. More gratifying, too.

Please email me (**kevin@milaegers.com**) with your questions and comments!

Click here to see **Kevin Milaeger's Vintage Ornament Blog**