



Kevin Milaeger

Milaeger's

Planting Now for Fall Harvest

It was pretty hectic here at Milaeger's this spring. With all the tumult about the pandemic we were busy chasing down virus rumors, making sure our facilities were safe for our staff and customers, and hoping for a good year—if we were able to be open at all! We weathered the spring storm, but in all that mayhem I neglected to sow the radish seed in our garden. So I've been buying radishes at the store until I picked up a couple of bunches at our Farmer's Market one Sunday. I'd forgotten how much more flavorful home grown radishes are. Now it's time to sow a fall radish crop, so I sowed seeds on August 9. The day following, the "Derecho" storm hit us. About 3.5" of rain fell in an hour or so.



radishes after one week

I was afraid the seeds would be washed out. But, three days after planting, the seeds sprouted right where I planted them. I followed a strict watering regimen, so important for radishes. Not submerged, but regular, even watering. They grow fast, and the earliness of the first harvest always surprises me. Maybe three weeks after planting. Remember, when planting root crops such as radishes, carrots, beets, and others, they do best in a light soil that is not compacted. Amend your soil with compost if you aren't sure about yours. More compost never hurts. I'm growing three radish varieties, including the 'Watermelon Radish.' It gets its name from its hot pink flesh, with a slim white edge. As I sowed the seed, I was already tasting them.



failed radishes 😞

To my great distress, the radishes never formed "bulbs." Where there should be a plump radish there is only a thin root, rather like a string. I

thought I did everything right, including plenty of moisture, but then I realized we had a stretch of very hot weather, which I now believe is the cause of the failure. But it's still early, so I took a hoe and scuttled the whole bunch, and sowed fresh seed. With cooler temperatures in the offing, I'm hoping for a good crop, just a bit later than planned.



Watermelon radish

At Milaeger's, the fall greens have been ready since the end of August. They include lettuce, spinach, kale, chard, and broccoli. About ten varieties. Plant an assortment. They all

mature at different rates, so with a mixture you'll always have something to pick. After you plant them, keep them well watered, just like the radishes. Flavor will then be at its best.



white radishes

Keep in mind that all of these greens can be grown successfully in containers. If you have a 15" diameter container, you could plant at least eight plants. Remember, you will be harvesting the greens as the plants grow (except the broccoli), so they will not get terribly large.

When we picture a garden, we often envision row after row of crops. It looks neat and tidy. But when planting late in the season for a late crop of greens, for example, we must be ready to use any space that is available. In my little garden some of the spring plants were finished so I pulled them out and planted lettuce in random open spaces. That worked out nicely, and I now have about twenty leaf

lettuce plants that will be ready to start harvesting by mid-September or so, even if they aren't in tidy rows.

Once again my garden at home has been plagued with varmints. Lots of chipmunks, especially. They eat the tomatoes as soon as they are fully ripe. Thankfully, they eat the whole fruit. It's really frustrating when they take a single bite out of each one. So far this summer I've trapped 30 of them using a live trap. I relocate them to a great spot, far from anyone's home, where there is plenty of water and cover. I think I moved the whole clan, one at a time. Now they can have a family reunion in their new home. But without tomatoes, I wonder what they'll do for food for the party?



assorted lettuce ready for planting