



**Kevin Milaeger**

*Milaeger's*

## **Planting Fall Greens--- what's your excuse?**

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**While its normal to start shutting down** the garden at this time, there is some planting yet to be done. As some plants have finished bearing and look forlorn, I like to remove them from the garden. Their presence is depressing. I don't need that. But their removal leaves a void. And what better way to resolve that than to put in some fresh new greens?

At Milaeger's we have been offering our "Greens to Grow" program in both spring and fall for a number of years now. In the spring, it's a way for gardeners to get a jump on the season, because all the plants we offer are cold hardy. Plant them as early as April 1. In the fall, the crop is available around September 1, and we've selected varieties that will withstand the light frosts that usually start around the end of October. Though the fall plants have been ready for several weeks now, I have plenty of poor excuses for not having planted mine. Finally, last week I got it done. It wasn't a big effort. Once the ground was prepared it took only a half hour or so to plant eight



**Kale Prizm**



**planting day September 18<sup>th</sup>**

plants each of three kinds of lettuce, and eight each of spinach and Swiss chard.

They perked up by the following morning and I predict the first harvest in 10-14 days. Unfortunately, some varmint already harvested one of the spinach plants. That happened right after planting and nothing has been bothered since. Fingers crossed. My method of harvesting can

begin early because I harvest only the outer leaves, and then wait for more to mature. They grow quickly. Alternatively, you could wait until the plant attains full

size and then harvest the entire thing, but I like my method because it extends the harvesting season.

Right alongside my newly planted greens are some robust Swiss chard that I planted around April first. They look great. I like them because they are one of the few greens that thrive in summer's heat, long after most lettuces have flagged. They are colorful

too. Many gardeners use them as an ornamental plant. My plants are planted in rows, but that's just because the garden was empty. You can spot any of these plants around the garden among any other plants, including ornamental ones. Then it



**Swiss chard planted April 1st**



**September 26<sup>th</sup>**

would be a true "kitchen garden." In England, especially before the industrial revolution, many people worked out of their homes, in various "cottage industries." Of course, they had all meals at home, and they all had gardens, usually right outside the kitchen. The garden was filled with edible plants and herbs, but over the years a few flowers crept in. Right outside the kitchen, it was easy for the cook to grab a handful of something. Because no space was wasted, if a plant died or was finished bearing, something else was put in, so the garden ended up with a somewhat haphazard arrangement. But it made sense to the gardener. I like to keep some edibles planted right outside the door, too. Chives, basil, and parsley for sure, and of course the tomatoes are nice and close. Probably the closer the garden is, the more likely you will use it.