



# The Seedling Chronicle



## In This Week's Share.....

### Kale~ "Toscano"

Dark green, blistered leaves. A "Laciniato" or "dinosaur" type kale. Mild flavor and vitamin rich. Tolerant to hot and cold weather.

### Kale~ "Red Russian"

Stems are purple; leaves are deep gray-green, purple-veined, flat, noncurled, and tooth-edged. Great for salads and light cooking.

### Spinach~ "Space"

Quantities of large, smooth to slightly savoyed, deep green leaves. Upright growth for clean leaves. Delicious flavor cooked or in salads. Slow bolting.

### Parsley~ "Forest Green"

Long, stiff, upright stems help keep the double and triple curled leaves clean and allow for easy bunching. Good flavor and yield. A biennial.

### Onions~ "Super Star"

Widely adapted, day-neutral variety. Produces uniform, large, white-skinned onions with mild flavor. Great for salads, slices, onion rings and frying. Not for long

### Onions~ "Bianca Di Maggio"

Medium-small, flat white cippolini onions. Avg. 2-3" diameter x 1 1/2" depth. Mild taste. Limited storage.

### "Evergreen Hardy White"

The most winter-hardy bunching onion. Little or no bulbing. May be handled as a perennial by dividing the clumps the second summer.

## Invasion of the Thrips

When I decided to take on this CSA, I knew that it would be an amazing learning experience and that there would be both challenges and opportunities along the way. This week, I was posed with a challenge....thrips!

On Monday morning, I was out in Doney Park when a co-worker brought to my attention the fact that we were being "swarmed" by tiny, slender insects (approximately 1/15 inch long). After inquiring, we discovered that they were thrips, voracious eaters that show up in Flagstaff in large

quantities about every other year.

Thrips cause damage by rasping surface cells with their mouthparts. Plants wounded by thrips will have a whitish or silver-flecked appearance.

Farmers and gardeners alike have tried all sorts of things to get rid of thrips. In a contained space such as a greenhouse, ladybugs and praying mantids can be used. Both of these amazing creatures have been a great help to me this past week.



## Onions

Onions are generally very hardy and easy to grow. One of the biggest factors affecting onion success is day length. Some onions need short days for bulbing, and others require long ones. The onions I have chosen for you are intermediate day varieties.

Onions like it warm and a southern exposure is a great advantage. Onions prefer loose, fertile, friable, well-drained soil with plenty of added organic matter. It is important for your onions to

get enough nitrogen, but too much can delay bulbing. Be sure your soil has adequate phosphorus, as a deficiency in this can result in onions that have thick necks and don't store well.

The shallow root systems of an onion is sensitive to fluctuations in water. Mulch to conserve water and to control weeds. Weeding is very important in a young onion patch, since onion leaves grow straight up and produce no weed-inhibiting shade.

A few of the products that have been recommended to me include Mite-X (a mixture of clove, garlic, and cottonseed oils), Neem Oil (a vegetable oil pressed from the fruit and seed of the Neem tree), and Safer Soap (a soap made from vegetable oils and animal fats). I'm sure that many other remedies exist, so if you have any advice for me or your fellow CSA members, please let us know, so we can be ready for their arrival next spring.

When transplanting your "Super Star" and "Bianca Di Maggio" onions, it is best to separate them carefully, placing them 4-6 inches apart in shallow furrows about 2 inches deep. Quickly push dirt around their roots, and water them immediately. This will minimize transplant shock.

You don't need to worry about separating the "Evergreen Hardy White" bunching onions, as they will not bulb up and can grow in close proximity to one another.



## Hardening Off

Hardening off is an important part of the transplanting process. The plants that you received in this week's share haven't gone through all of the steps listed because I didn't want to stress them out during the thrips invasion. Flagstaff has many differing microclimates and growing conditions that it may be a good idea to acclimate these plants to your site before planting.

### Step1

Begin hardening off your

seedlings about a week before their transplant date. Keep the seedlings well watered throughout the process.

### Step2

Set the containers in a sheltered, shady spot outdoors. A covered porch is an ideal starter spot, so is a table or bench under a leafy tree. Bring the [plants](#) back inside at night, and bring them in at any time of day if the weather turns cold, windy or rainy.

### Step3

Expose the plants gradually to more sun. After two or three

days, you can safely keep them in the sun for half a day, then return them to the shade. By the end of the week they'll be tough enough to soak up the rays all day.

### Step4

Transplant on an overcast day or in the early evening to ease the shock of transition. Always handle plants by their leaves or by the root ball. Avoid grasping the plant by its stem. I like to dip my six-packs in a liquid seaweed/water mix before transplanting. The seaweed provides nutrients and reduces stress on young seedlings.

## Why I Wake Early

Hello, sun in my face.  
Hello, you who made the morning  
and spread it over the fields  
and into the faces of the tulips  
and the nodding morning glories,  
and into the windows of,  
even, the miserable and the crotchety –  
best preacher that ever was,  
dear star, that just happens  
to be where you are in the universe  
to keep us from ever-darkness,  
to ease us with warm touching,  
to hold us in the great hands of light –  
good morning, good morning,  
good morning.  
Watch, now, how I start the day  
in happiness, in kindness.  
~ Mary Oliver ~

### Note to Members:

The Flagstaff Garden Starts CSA recycles! Please bring your flats and empty six-packs back during the next pick-up and I'll use them again.

## Kale

Kale has become popular among landscape-conscious vegetable gardeners who are interested in adding color as well as attractive leaf forms to their gardens.

Kale provides a hefty amount of calcium, iron, and vitamins A and C, and they even supply some protein. Kale can be grown in light soils than winter cabbage and will deliver a harvest even when grown in poor, nutrient-deficient soil that would be the ruin of many plants. For the best quality crop, you should work

in plenty of well-rotted manure or compost before planting.

Harvest by clipping individual leaves. The best insect control on young plants is the use of fabric row covers which prevent the insects' access to the plants.

Kale will tolerate some shade, but full sun is preferable. If garden space is such that some crops have to be partially shaded, reserve the full-sun area for warm season crops.

## Spinach

Spinach is typically thought of as a cool season crop that does not tolerate hot weather well. The variety "Space" which I have chosen to grow is supposed to be both cold and heat tolerant. It can be grown any time of year, but will most likely become less productive as the weather gets hotter. It will also be more susceptible to bolting at this time.

Spinach can be planted in partial shade and is sensitive to acidity. The pH should be at least 6.0, preferably 6.5-7.5.

Harvest spinach early, cutting just below root attachment for "rooted" spinach, or cut higher for "clipped spinach." Since harvest season is brief, it is recommended that you harvest the entire plant rather than single leaves in the cut-and-come-again fashion.

## Parsley

Parsley is a popular herb for salads, garnishes and drying.

Parsley can be planted in full sun or partial shade and grows well in moist, fertile soil. It should be watered during dry spells and side dress with compost or a balanced fertilizer once or twice during the growing period, if necessary.

The leaves of parsley can be clipped as needed. Parsley can be used either fresh or dried. To dry, wash clipped leaves and spread out shallowly on screens in a warm, airy place. When thoroughly dry, it can be stored in glass jars.

Plants can be carefully dug and kept indoors as potted plants for fresh parsley during the winter. It may also be possible to overwinter outdoors if mulched properly.