PACIFIC COAST FARMERS' MARKET ASSOCIATION

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AMAZING MICROGREENS

Farmers are now offering tiny baby seedlings of familiar plants, called microgreens, with chefs promoting them as a popular addition to their menus. They're even appearing in recipes prepared by your local food trucks. What are microgreens and why are they currently so popular now?

Microgreens, not to be confused with 'sprouts,'* are very young, leafy shoots of some of your favorite vegetables and flowers, such as wheat grass, sunflowers, buckwheat, radish, lettuce, broccoli, arugula, carrot, and many more. They're no larger than 1-1/2 to 3 inches tall and no older than two to three weeks between germination and harvest. Think about them as a stage of growth between sprouts and standard baby greens.

This stage of growth could hold more nutrient value than their grown-up counterparts, according to recent research.** Looking at various nutrients, they found that microgreens have four to six times the nutrient value of mature plants!

Oliver Gayo, owner and farmer of Super Duper Microgreens states, "They are the perfect food, full of minerals and vitamins. And they all have different tastes and textures." Watch the full interview with Gayo on our website Inside a Backyard Microgreens Farm.

Microgreens can also offer additional flavor and texture to your everyday meals. Pick up some fresh

Microgreens can also offer additional flavor and texture to your everyday meals. Pick up some fresh microgreens at your local farmers' market and try their intense wonderful flavor. Use microgreens in salads and sandwiches. Sprinkle on seafood or meat. Garnish deviled eggs and appetizers. Add as a topping to pizza or egg dishes.

Why buy them at your farmers' market? First, selection! Most grocery stores only stock a few varieties, if any, while the farmers' market has many different varieties and flavors. Second, freshness. You can be assured that the farmers picked their microgreens just before coming to the market. Some farmers even allow customers to select and harvest this delightfully tiny row crop right at the market! The third is purity. Best of all, you know where they're from – your farmer brings them directly from the farm to you!

Meet the farmer and talk to them about the blends they offer. They can suggest how to best incorporate them into your meals and recipes.

Gayo says, "Growing locally is important to me and when you buy them at the farmers' market, you know they'll last longer when you get them home because I pick my microgreens the day before bringing them to the market."

Microgreens are very delicate. After all, they're baby shoots! Because of their small size and water content, it is not recommended to cook them. Use them fresh to retain their tender texture. Purchase only a few days before using them – due to their delicate nature, they don't stay fresh long! Be sure to gently wash them right before eating and not before. Remove any roots – eat only the stem and leaves.

Find fresh and healthy microgreens at your farmers' market from Super Duper Microgreens out of Hercules, where they grow a wide variety of greens. They also sell containers of mixed microgreens. You can also have them grow to order special greens. Rapha Farms from Campbell sells hydroponically-grown microgreens and offers several condiments and pesto made with them. Lake Family Forest Farms in Carmel Valley also grows a nice variety of hand-harvested microgreens.

Be sure to try some of these delightful little greens next time you shop at your farmers' market. They're a new crop sure to gain a foothold in the farmers' market world with their amazing flavor and nutrition.

**Sprouts are grown in water without sunlight and are susceptible to E. Coli; the US Government recommends against eating sprouts.*

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TAGS

microgreens