

Feral and Perennial Vegetables

For the Los Angeles area

with low-chill winters and dry summers

Feral Vegetables	Easy Annuals	Other recommendations	Poor results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amaranth • Arugula • Borage (2) • Chard • Chicory (Ital. dandelion) • Cilantro (11) • Collards • Corn salad (mache) • Currant tomato • Daikon radish (1) • Fennel (10) • Flat-leaf parsley • Frisee (curly endive) • Magenta spreen • Miner's lettuce (Claytonia) • Nasturtium (9) • Nettles • Par Cel herb • Parsnip (6) • Pepper, serrano (3) • Purslane • Salsify • Sunflowers • Tomatillo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lettuce (cool season) • Slow bolt lettuce varieties (early spring) • Mesclun mixes (4) • Other mixes (carrot, etc) (4) • Snowpeas (cool season) • Drought tolerant beans such as Native American varieties (5) • Blackeyed peas, esp drought-tolerant Native American varieties (warm season) (5) • Fava beans (cool season) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artichoke (short lived perennial with summer dieback) (7) • Arugula sylvetta (perennial) • Asparagus (perennial w/dieback) • Chard (cut & come again) • Chayote (short-lived perennial) (8) • Chives • Collards (cut & come again) • Daylily (I haven't tasted it, ask John) • Kale (cut & come again) • Lemongrass (perennial) • Lima bean, Christmas (3) • Mint and spearmint (spreading perennial) • Onion, Egyptian walking (bulbet) • Onion, l'ittoi (multiplier onion?) (5) • Oregano (spreading perennial) • Rhubarb (neighbors grow it, I haven't) • Rosemary (large perennial shrub) • Runner beans (short-lived perennial with dieback) • Sorrel (perennial) • Shallots (my sister grows) • Strawberries, Alpine or Wild (acid) • Thyme (perennial) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good King Henry (slow growing, pests, unpalatable) • Ground cherry (needed cooler temps & more water than our summers) • Potato onion (poor performance) • Ramps (need much more rain) • Saffron crocus (seems to need winter chill) • Watercress (needs running water despite Toensmeier's comments to the contrary) • Welsh onion (poor performance and limited yield)

-- Joanne Poyourow

Things I have yet to try:

Cardoon, scorzonera, sunchokes, yacon, arracacha, mushrooms
 sea kale, salt bush, samphire (my sister's pioneering them)
 new zealand spinach and nopales/prickly pear (Erik Knutzen is a big fan of these)

- (1) soil builder, dynamic accumulator. Leaves make great soup, base is good pickled, crunchy young green pods are nice in salads.
- (2) Flowers edible in salads, taste like cucumber. Beneficial insect attractant plant. Leaves make tea but I haven't tried it.
- (3) Push the limits. Observe microclimes and design accordingly. These plants will over-winter in spots with intense winter sun.
- (4) With mixes, something always comes up. You may find that different things come up in different garden microclimes, or that different things come up when you plant the same mix at different times of year. Mixes are a great way to find plants and varieties that "like you"
- (5) Source: Native Seed/SEARCH
- (6) Seed is extremely short lived (<6months), thus getting it established is tricky. Once established, don't allow the patch to dry out and break the chain of life cycles.
- (7) The best part of the artichoke is the small side chokes that appear after you've harvested the big supermarket-sized one from the center. The baby ones are soooo sweet and delicious!
- (8) definitely "beat it down with a stick"! yields in late summer/early autumn of 2nd year. Supposed to give 100 fruits per vine and it's true. Vine will grow to 50-100ft. tender, so protect it that first winter. Toensmeier says the young leaves and shoot tips are edible as cooking greens.
- (9) Flowers edible in salads. Young leaves delicious in mesclun salads. Green pods can be lacto-fermented (pickled/brined) as a substitute for capers
- (10) Bulbing fennel vegetable is a different subvariety than the *Foeniculum vulgare* that grows wild in the Santa Monica mountains. Both will go feral in our L.A. gardens. On either kind, when seedheads begin to form, taste the succulent green pods (the part that will become the seeds). Yum!
- (11) Transplant volunteers to among your brassicas (broccoli family) – it seems to deter cabbage moth! When allowed to go to flower, it is beautiful like Queen Anne's Lace, and a powerhouse of a beneficial insect attractant.