



Update: Cyclospora Outbreak Still Active



Outbreak of Cyclospora illnesses linked to iceberg lettuce from Taylor Farms.



Cyclospora is a parasite that can cause diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea, fatigue, and loss of appetite.



What You Really Need To Do!



Check the bag. The recall includes Marketside Iceberg Salad and Shredded Lettuce sold at select Walmart stores, with best-by dates from July 18 through August 3.



Do not try to save it. Throw recalled lettuce away or return it, then clean your refrigerator, counters, containers and anything else it touched.



Not all lettuce is recalled. Best advice is this: steer clear of pre-cut or bagged salad mixes when you cannot confirm the exact brand or source.



Ask questions when eating out. Taco Bell stopped using the affected Taylor Farms lettuce, and Jack in the Box removed and replaced lettuce that may have reached some locations.



Know your grower. Know your food. Buy whole produce from trusted local farmers and gardeners, ask where it was grown and build real relationships. That is exactly what Collectively Sustainable is all about.

QUICK REMINDER



Every recall may not make the news, so it's always a good idea to check the FDA website from time to time for active updates and information that can help keep you and your family safe.

Investigations of Foodborne Illness Outbreaks : FDA



Why this matters

Recalls seem to be happening more and more often—from produce to meat.

That's why learning to grow your own food and supporting trusted local food sources is more important than ever.

Collectively Sustainable exists to help our community become healthier, more self-reliant, and more resilient—together.



“This is exactly why growing your own food matters more now than ever.”

Remember, not every farmers market vendor is a grower

Page 2: How to spot real local produce vs. resold produce.

Real Local Produce vs. Resold Produce

More people are turning to farmers markets for fresh food, but let's keep it real, not every vendor is a grower. Here's how to know what you're buying, ask the right questions, and build relationships with local farmers and gardeners you can trust.



SIGNS IT MAY BE THE REAL DEAL

- Seasonal variety instead of everything under the sun
- Shapes, colors, and sizes are a little imperfect
- Greens may have a little dirt or roots attached
- The grower can explain how and when it was grown and how it was harvested
- Smaller quantities usually mean it was actually harvested locally



ASK BEFORE YOU BUY

- “Did you grow this yourself?”
- “Where is your farm or garden?”
- “What was harvested this week?”
- “What do you use for pest control?”
- “How should I store or preserve this?”

This is not about suspicion. It is about relationship-building. Good farmers are usually proud to tell the story of the food.

This is exactly why the Collectively Sustainable community matters. We help connect people with real local growers, trusted resources, and the skills needed to know where their food comes from. The goal is simple: build strong hyperlocal food systems rooted in real relationships, real knowledge, and real community.



POSSIBLE RED FLAGS

- Huge variety of perfect produce every week, all year
- Out-of-season items with no clear explanation
- Produce that looks exactly like grocery-store stock
- Vendor cannot answer basic questions about the farm or harvest
- Stickers, branded boxes, or wholesale packaging



QUICK BUYING TIPS

- Make a list before you go
- Shop seasonal first
- Check bruises, odd smells, and texture
- Bring bags and a cooler
- Buy cold items last
- Keep raw meat and eggs separate from produce
- Wash produce under running water just before eating or preparing it.
- Plan to freeze, dry, can, or share extras

Know your grower.

Know your food.

Community Marketplace + Barter

Farm Fresh 24/7 helps make hyperlocal food systems visible. Use it to find growers, makers, food, supplies, and community resources near you.

BARTER

BUY

SELL

GIVE AWAY

15 THINGS YOU CAN FIND OR OFFER

1 Vegetables

2 Fruits

3 Plants + Seeds

4 Homemade Goods

5 Handmade Goods

6 Meat + Eggs

7 Seafood

8 Food Venues

9 Supplies

10 Business to Business

11 Food Pantry

12 Education

13 Land Access

14 Herbal Teas

15 Mushrooms

Post what you have. Search for what you need. Support the growers, bakers, makers and neighbors keeping food close to home.

REAL TALK

If we want stronger food systems, we have to know who grows, bakes, makes, teaches and shares in our own neighborhoods.

SCAN FARM FRESH 24/7



or go to:
farmfresh247.com

DOWNLOAD THE APP

Look for the iOS and Android app buttons on Farm Fresh 24/7. Create an account, search by category, and connect with local sellers, growers and makers.



Plant Now, Harvest This Fall

To all my gardeners, yes, the summer heat has been brutal. But don't give up now. A fresh growing season is ahead, so let's reset and get ready to grow again.



WHAT TO PLANT NOW IN YOUR AREA

Because fall arrives at different times across the country, start with your ZIP code and first frost date. Then count backward to see what still has time to grow where you live.

10–12 WEEKS BEFORE FROST

Broccoli • Brussels sprouts • Cabbage • Cauliflower • Carrots

8–10 WEEKS BEFORE FROST

Kale • Lettuce • Spinach • Swiss chard • Mustard • Turnips

6–8 WEEKS BEFORE FROST

Beets • Radishes • Fast-growing salad greens

Check your local frost date: [Old Farmer's Almanac Calculator](#).
[Old Farmer's Almanac Calculator](#)

- **Start small.** Pick three or four cool-weather crops you will actually eat. You do not need to plant the whole seed aisle.
- **Know your zone and first frost date.** Fall planting is all about timing, and every part of the country is different.
- **Keep showing up.** Water consistently, watch the weather, and protect young plants if temperatures suddenly drop. Your garden does not need perfection, just attention.

Start With the Soil

Let's talk dirt, because this is where most gardens win or struggle. Your mix does not have to be perfect. As you garden, you'll learn what works for your plants, your weather and your containers. Start with the basics, then adjust as you grow.



*Roots need food, water and air.
Give them that, and you are
already gardening smarter
than yesterday.*

What goes in the mix?

- Compost feeds the soil. Finished compost, Black Kow or aged cow manure, and mushroom compost can all help
- Peat moss or coconut coir holds moisture so roots do not dry out too fast
- Perlite adds air and drainage. Vermiculite holds more moisture
- Worm castings add gentle, slow-release nutrients. Mix them directly into your potting mix, using them as part of the compost portion
- Do not plant in pure compost or worm castings. Mix it with fluffy stuff so roots can breathe.

Potting Mix vs. Garden Soil

- Potting mix is for containers. It is lighter, drains better and gives roots room to breathe
- Garden soil/topsoil belongs in the ground. In pots, it can get heavy, packed down and soggy

Easy Mixes to Start With

- Basic container mix: 1 part compost or worm castings + 1 part peat/coir + 1 part perlite or vermiculite
- Thirsty plants: 3 parts peat/coir + 2 parts compost or worm castings + 1 part perlite or vermiculite
- Heavy feeders: 2 parts potting mix + 1 part compost or aged manure + 1/2 part worm castings + 1 part peat/coir + 1 part perlite

Fertilizer + Mulch

- Fish fertilizer gives vegetables and herbs a quick liquid boost
- Tiger Bloom supports flowers and fruit. Meal fertilizers release nutrients more slowly
- Worm castings provide gentle nutrients without being too strong for young plants
- Straw, shredded leaves, and untreated wood chips are good mulch options. Mulch holds moisture, cools the soil, slows weeds, and protects roots.

Make Your Fall Garden Work

Planting is only the beginning. Keep it simple: give young crops good soil, steady water, and protection when the weather turns.



DO THIS NOW

- Add compost to tired soil before planting again
- Keep newly planted seeds moist, but not soaking
- Give young plants some shade when the heat gets too intense
- Plant a few more lettuce seeds every two weeks so everything is not ready at once
- *Use starter plants instead of seeds when you do not have much growing time left*
- Water deeply, then give the soil time to dry a little before watering again
- Check your plants often for slugs, caterpillars, and cabbage worms

PROTECT THE HARVEST

- Cover plants with a lightweight garden blanket or cover them with an old sheet when frost is coming.
- Add straw, leaves, or mulch around carrots, beets, and radishes to help keep the soil warmer
- Pick the larger outside leaves from lettuce and greens so the center can keep growing
- Pick ripe vegetables before a big storm or sudden cold snap
- Do not leave harvested produce sitting in the sun. Bring it inside, brush off any loose dirt and store it properly so it lasts longer
- *Label what you planted and when. Trust me, by harvest time, those little green leaves will all start looking like cousins*

No Yard? No Problem.

Everyone deserves a chance to grow their own food. Whether you have an apartment, townhome, balcony, patio, or sunny window, you are still in the garden game.



If all you have is a porch, balcony, one bright window or a small corner inside, use it. Inexpensive grow lights and a small indoor greenhouse can also help you grow more than you think.

Start where you are and grow what you can.

A little encouragement

Do not let a small space talk you out of a real harvest. One pot can become dinner. One herb can save money. One green thing can remind you that you are capable.

Easy starter setup

- 1 deep pot or grow bag
- Potting mix, not yard dirt (See page 5 for potting mix instructions)
- lettuce, herbs or green onions
- drainage holes and a saucer

Small-space growing tips that actually make sense

- Start with 2 or 3 plants, not a full farm
- Grow food you actually eat
- Use containers with drainage holes
- Put plants where the sun shows up
- No good sun? Try a small grow light
- Grow up with shelves, rails or hanging pots
- Balconies dry out fast, so check water often
- Use lightweight pots if you are upstairs
- Ask your landlord before drilling or hanging
- Herbs, lettuce and microgreens are a great start

Hands-on Learning: Each One, Teach One

This is where we learn by doing. We make, grow, mix and create using ingredients right from our kitchen and garden. These are skills and lessons we can use in real life.

What to expect

- Every workshop is the second Wednesday of the month
- Time: 5:30 p.m. ET
- Real hands-on classes for everyday life
- Come ready to learn, ask questions, and make something
- More classes are coming in 2027

Pass it on

What we learn about growing our own food should never stop with us. We teach it, share it, and pass it down so the next generation will always know how to plant, provide, and take care of one another.

Upcoming 2026 Workshops



Earlier 2026 Workshop Highlights

- Healing herbs for specific ailments
- Homemade bread making
- Seed-starting supplies
- Container gardening
- Making your own probiotic



Become a Member of Collectively Sustainable

If you've been looking for real community, real connection, and real ways to grow, this is your invitation. Come as you are, bring what you know, and let's build something meaningful together.



Not a member yet?
Scan to become a member



Or visit

collectivelysustainable.org/becoming-a-member

Newsletter Contact
Jennifer Duckworth
Collectively Sustainable Newsletter Editor
elavenderpublishing@gmail.com

What makes us different?

Hyperlocal and Hands-On

- We focus on real-world learning and connect people with local growers and sustainability experts.

Barter-Based and Inclusive

- We believe skill and resource exchange should make sustainability accessible to everybody.

Member benefits

- Stay connected to events, workshops, and updates
- Build relationships with growers, makers, and neighbors
- Learn practical skills for hyperlocal food systems