

CASCADE SPROUTS

One day at the Cascade Sprouts booth, a customer bought a container of alfalfa sprouts and immediately handed it to their young child in a stroller. Katie Moeller said she watched in amazement as the child began to snack on them by the handful. This is a testament to the fact that microgreens are delicious, as well as being packed with nutrients.

Katie and her husband John began growing microgreens about four years ago when John's sister Kira Blok, the owner of The Purple Cow (one of our other vendors!), mentioned there was a market for microgreens among chefs in the area. In addition to selling to restaurants, Cascade Sprouts began attending the East Vancouver Farmers Market. When COVID took a toll on restaurants, Katie and John switched their focus to markets, and now sell 90% of their product at the VFM downtown market.

Cascade Sprouts grows the microgreens in a large, climate-controlled box indoors. Inside the box are wire shelving units filled with trays. Each shelf has LED lights on the bottom, allowing them to maximize use of the vertical space. They grow hydroponically, filling each microgreen tray with water. On top of the bottom tray, they place a mesh tray with a hemp mat in it. The seeds sprout on top of the mat, which serves as a replacement for soil. Cascade Sprouts' production process is close to zero waste, Katie said. Everything they grow with and use for packaging is compostable or reusable.

They enjoy educating people about both the nutritional and flavor value of microgreens. In this early phase of their growth, sprouts are typically much more nutrient dense than their full-grown counterparts. Microgreens grow fast – they are ready for harvest 10 days after seeding. Cascade Sprouts mainly offers alfalfa, broccoli, clover, mustard, and radish shoots, and occasionally rotates in sunflower and pea shoots.

"It's exciting every week to see how many people will have that light bulb moment and realize they're really good," Katie said. You can pick up microgreens from Cascade Sprouts during a visit to the market, or you could order them online for delivery to your home or business in Vancouver and Portland.

