

# THIS IS WHAT REAL FOOD LOOKS LIKE



## Bugs Happen

This is damage from the **Flea Beetle**—they love brassicas too so you may see these little holes on arugula, mustards, radish, turnips and kale. As organic farmers, we can use row cover all season to protect the produce from invading bugs, but it's not always possible due to cost, environment or labor.

## Imperfectly Perfect

Don't worry. The beetle damage doesn't impact the flavor one bit. Try educating your eaters that this is just part of eating real food.

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## A Little Twisted

**Misshapen and blemished** produce are a part of life in an organic environment: roots run into rocks, there's a pollination mishap, and life creates inconsistencies. We can trellis, properly space, and prep the soil well, but produce of unusual size, shape or color is normal on every farm due to various environmental factors.

## Interesting, Not Ugly

It's estimated 25-40% of fruit and vegetable waste is from "unsellable" "ugly" produce. We like to think beauty is in the eye of the beet holder.

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## Lumps and Bumps

**Catfacing** is tissue damage that occurs when the fruit or vegetable is affected either by cold or by insect bites when it is young. Temperatures below 50 degrees can cause incomplete pollination. Pests like boxelders and stinkbugs can be the culprit. Heirloom varieties are more prone to catfacing.

## Baby, It's Cold Outside

Did you know there are zero frost free days in Central Oregon? The extreme diurnal swings in temperature (sometimes up to 60 degrees) can be a major cause of catfacing.

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## Let's Make Like a Tomato And Split

In the dry and unforgiving climate of the high desert, timing the irrigation on certain crops can be downright tricky. **Tomatoes and tomatillos split** when the plants dry out and then experience a sudden large uptake in water. The parched tomato will take up as much water as it can, so much so that sometimes the skin can't keep up with the amount of growth and bursts under the pressure.

## Ready to Eat

When at the Farmers Market, consider picking up a split tomato to eat that night. Usually the split tomatoes are the most ripe, and will not last as long on your counter.

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## We're For Inner Beauty

The radish **root maggot** can be a particularly rude pest in the vegetable garden. These pale larvae tunnel through the root flesh of many root crops, leaving unsightly, slimy brown trails. Members of the mustard family, including radish and turnip, are most often affected. This damage isn't visible until the crop is harvested and prepared.

## Try As We Might

Farmers try not to include wormy roots, but sometimes they slip through unnoticed. Consider cutting off these sections and eating the rest!

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## **Holy Cabbage, Kale and Collards!**

Have you ever seen graceful white butterflies dance over the field at a farm? Well those destructive devils—**Cabbage Moths**— are responsible for eating holes in your kale, cabbage, collards, and making homes in broccoli and cauliflower. Their tiny green caterpillars feed on all members of the brassica family.

## **Eat Like a Superhero**

Fight back against cabbageworms—eat the hole-y kale and soak your broccoli before cooking. Your farmers thank you.

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## It's Gettin' Hot in Here

**Sunscald** is caused by excessive sunlight and excessive temperature that heats up the skin of fruiting crops and damages it. Some protection is provided by the plant itself by having a large canopy of leaves that protect the fruit. Using shade cloth can be an effective means of preventing sunscald, but when it is over 100 degrees outside it is hard to cool anything off.

## Just a Blemish

When it is 90 degrees outside it can be over 130 degrees inside of a bell pepper! Simply cut off the sunscald part and the remaining pepper will be just as sweet or spicy as their more beautiful counterparts.

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## Beauty is Cell Wall Deep

**Tipburn** is related to calcium and the ability of the rapidly growing tissues of the lettuce to avail itself of the calcium. Calcium is required for strong cell walls. It usually occurs during hot weather when the lettuce is rapidly growing, making for uneven distribution of calcium in the plant. It affects the outer leaves because they are the ones that transpire more than the inner leaves.

## Take a Little Off the Top

In these times of drought and intense heat, help your farmers by cutting the tips of the lettuce off before chopping into your salad. You and your guests will never know the difference!