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Vernal Luminaries

The proverb, “No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow,” is certain to provide encouragement for restaurateurs who are holding out for sunny spring days. Even chefs who have had local produce in addition to root vegetables for the past several months are craving the unique treasures of spring. Here’s a look beyond artichokes, asparagus, and avocados.



Miner's Lettuce

This tender wild green is at home in mixed-leaf salads from March to June. With its sweet, mild flavor and tiny white blossoms, it blends well with bitter greens such as arugula. Its moniker comes from the miners of the California gold rush, who ate it to prevent scurvy. nafood.com

Beemster Nettle

This stellar selection from Beemster screams spring with its buttery yellow color and flecks of dark green leaves. It is as creamy as it looks, and the mild milky flavors are highlighted with hints of rye and green vegetable. It shows a great affinity for melting and would complement rich Hollandaise and seasonal fruit. beemster.us



Tea forté's Cocktail Infusions

Created specifically for use in cocktails, this new line of products makes it easy to infuse spirits and syrups. The signature pyramid tea bags are dressed up in bright pastels with such flavors as Lavender Citrus, Lemongrass Mint, and Silkroad Chai. teaforte.com



Philip Ward of Death + Company recommends using the infusions to flavor large batches of spirits or syrups, making cocktail preparation consistent and effortless for busy bars.



Use suggestion by Dino Cialfi, chef owner of Peppercorn's Grill, Hartford, Connecticut

Mix 75 percent miner's lettuce with 25 percent arugula. Add sliced kumquats, toasted almonds, and dried cherries. Serve with a blood-orange-and-Prosecco vinaigrette blended from reductions of blood-orange juice and Prosecco, extra virgin olive oil, Sherry vinegar, Dijon mustard, salt, and pepper.