By Kylee Baumle

I know we've just come out on the other side of Thanksgiving and we may be feeling a bit remorseful about eating a little too much. And, maybe, some of us plunked down a few too many dollars on Black Friday. So it isn't as if you need any more bad news, but since we're on a roll, let's just get it over with.

The growing season has pretty much come to a halt for the year, especially when it comes to edibles. Oh, there might be some parsley or spinach still looking good, but for the most part, if we haven't canned it, frozen it, pickled it, dried it, or otherwise stored it, we're going to have to find another way to get fresh fruits and veggies if we want them.

Here's where the bad news comes in. There's a list going around called "The Dirty Dozen." You may have heard about it already since a new list is made every year. If you're like me, you read it and then stick your head in the sand. Ignorance is bliss, they say. It's a list of the top 12 fresh fruits and vegetables that are the most highly contaminated with pesticides.

Can you guess which one is right there at the top? Apples. That's right, the one you're supposed to eat every day to keep the doctor away. I wonder.

The next two on the list I can do without, but if you like celery and sweet bell peppers, you're out of luck. With the exception of those two, the entire rest of the list contains some of my very favorites: peaches, strawberries, imported nectarines, grapes, lettuce, cucumbers, domestic blueberries, and potatoes.

And if that isn't bad enough, this year they added a "Plus" list that included fresh edibles that weren't quite as contaminated as the Dirty Dozen, but are still supposed to be of concern. Those are green beans and kale. Just shoot me now.

I'm not about to stop eating them and I doubt you are either, but it's worth giving some thought to what we do with these things after we bring them home and before we eat them. Clean them as best you can of course, but buying organic versions of what you eat the most of is a better option. And there's always growing your own and preserving them. Many of us are doing just that.

The list is compiled each year by the Environmental Working Group and is based on data from the United States Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration. These two government agencies test for pesticide residues on fruits and vegetables as they would normally be eaten following cleaning and/or peeling. So even if you clean or peel these, you're still eating bug spray. Ugh.

Though there hasn't been extensive testing on the long-term effects of ingesting pesticides (gosh, I wish they would have done that), there is evidence to suggest that they have harmful effects on human beings in various ways, including a connection to certain diseases including some types of cancer.

If you think about it, these pesticides are designed to kill living things, even if they are just bugs.

Aren't I just a ray of sunshine in the middle of your week? You're welcome. Next week will be better, I promise. Because oh yes, there's also a list of good guys and there are 15 on that one.

Read more at Kylee's blog, Our Little Acre, at www.ourlittleacre.com and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OurLittleAcre. Contact her at PauldingProgressGardener@gmail.com.