



WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 16TH, 2019 #38/52

Growing Stronger

I can't lie, it is incredibly hard living this life without Nigel. Not only have I lost my partner who held my heart and soul, but I live the life *he* created. Everything I do, everywhere my gaze falls, he is there. But when you share as much as we did, it is a no brainer to keep this vision of his going and tough it out, even though daily I have to ask myself what would he have done? I am not a farmer, nor was this my calling. Food has always been my center, and an organic farm is ground zero for this life long passion of mine, so in many ways, as hard as it is, it makes sense. But when something big happens, my heart sinks and the tiniest bit of panic wants to creep its way into my being. Losing Juanita and Andrea at the same exact time was horrifying because there was no one to turn to for guidance or help. Fortunately between Andrew, Cameron and I, with some counsel from Ramon, we pieced it all together. I have realized the beauty of being thrown into the deep end is I had to make it my own, and I have. Two weeks now I have worked out in the pack house. It has been a real challenge having so much extra work, yet despite that I feel so much stronger, physically, mentally and emotionally. I think I may have even impressed the crew a bit. To be honest I have been fearful of entering into the crew's domain too much. I struggle with the language barrier but the greater barrier has been my own lack of confidence. Occasionally I would jump in to lend a helping hand for a couple of hours here and there but for the most part I never knew exactly all that they do day to day, week to week. Quickly, it became clear how and where I wanted to make changes. Step one was to get the pack house cleaned and organized. Next, I restructured how and when we do certain tasks so we can be ahead of the game at the start of the week. One example is we now make up the CSA boxes on Friday. Do you have any idea how long it takes to make up 500 CSA boxes? That seemingly insignificant task, literally, takes a couple of hours. The egg coolers are also done on Friday, emptied, wiped out and ice packs tossed into the freezer. Performing these tasks on Fridays saves us hours on Monday. Plus we are now making up all of the CSA boxes for the entire week, so we don't have to squeeze that in on Wednesday. Sorting all of this out has been great, but then I realized that I had to train a new person while I was training myself and that sent my head spinning. I could look around and see the 100 different tasks that needed doing, still not completely clear as to the order in which they should be completed. I found it a real challenge to remember to explain and delegate. There are so many things that must happen to prepare everything that goes into the CSA boxes. To bag or not to bag? How would a new person know the answer to that question? If we are bagging, what is the quantity. I made the mistake two weeks ago of going heavy on the summer squash and we ended up not having enough for all of the boxes, so the crew had to go back out and pick again. My simple mistake meant that 4 or 5 guys had to spend another

30 minutes picking zucchini, not only was a waste of time and money, that was time spent not doing other tasks they should have been doing. Believe me I was far more conscientious last week. Nigel used to tell me that what he felt set him apart was that he didn't allow his fears to hold him back. He was a go getter, he didn't blindly run in, but run he always did. He never shied away from a new project because he was afraid of failing. He just tried it, and he was never afraid to say let's chuck this one in, cause it just isn't working. So here I am, realizing that these past few weeks have me finally feeling some of the strength required to make my own mistakes (I know plenty of mistakes have happened all along). Life will always bring us plenty of struggles and opportunities to make mistakes. Don't let your fear of failing hold you back, look deep inside and find *your* strength. Sometimes it means you have to sit still and quiet for a while to find it. Listen to that voice that comes from deep inside of you, not that voice that has been influenced by everyone else, because in the end, we all have to own our life choices, so why not make them our's.

Shallots Vs Onions

This week's Family box will have both shallots and onions, so I thought it would be good to explain the difference. Thank goodness for Deborah Madison's *Vegetable Literacy*, where she gives good explanations for all of the veg in her book. She explains "Storage Onions", which is what we currently have, are harvested, and cured. These are your common white, yellow or red onion. Deborah says that the three colors can be used interchangeably, although they have their own characteristics. White onions are the mildest great for Mexican dishes, reds are strong but sweet, perfect for grilling, and the yellow onion is your common cooking onion, perfect for soups and stews.

Shallots form clusters of bulbs and are known as multiplier onions. After removing the coppery paper, you will find there are 2 or 3 shallots. When cutting/ chopping they can seem quite strong, causing tearing, but they are mostly a milder flavor than onions. Common in French cuisine, particularly in vinaigrettes and beurre blanc, shallots are also a favorite in Asia where they are pickled or cut into threads and fried until golden and crisp. With long cooking they tend to lose their flavor, so not the best choice for soups or stews.



RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

This week we have included a bunch of Shiso in the Family Box. I have seen recipes for Shiso Mojitos or adding it to vinaigrette. Here is a link to a site with 43 Things To Do With Shiso <https://cnz.to/ingredients-fine-foods/43-things-to-do-with-fresh-shiso/>. Over the past couple of weeks I have suggested making hot sauce out of the Cayenne Peppers, I made some and it is delicious. It is really worth making your own. Wear gloves though, and don't rub your eyes! I found it was a bit too thick so I added a bit of water. Here is a link to the recipe I used <https://www.chilipeppermadness.com/recipes/cayenne-pepper-sauce/#wprm-recipe-container-10163>

Summer Squash Curry

Recipe by David Tanis found in NYT cooking

Coconut Oil
1 Onion, chopped
Salt and Pepper
1 tsp grated Garlic
1 tsp grated Ginger
1 Serrano or bird's-eye chile pepper, finely chopped, use the Cayenne but use about 1/2
1 tablespoon Turmeric
1 TB Fish Sauce or Light Soy Sauce
Zest and juice of 1 Lime
1 can Coconut Milk (about 13.5 ounces)
2 pounds small Summer Squash, cut in 1-inch cubes, slices or wedges
Mint leaves, for garnish
Basil leaves, for garnish
Cilantro sprigs, for garnish
Melt 2 tablespoons coconut oil in a large heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onion, season with salt and pepper, and cook until softened without browning, about 5 minutes. Add garlic, ginger, chile, turmeric, fish sauce (or soy sauce, for vegetarians) and lime zest and juice, stir, and cook for an additional minute. Add coconut milk, bring to a simmer and cook until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Add summer squash and peas, if using, and cook gently until just tender but still firm, about 5 minutes more. Turn off the heat. Transfer squash and sauce to a deep, wide serving dish or divide among large soup bowls. Garnish with mint, basil and cilantro.

Walnut Shallot Vinaigrette

Recipe from Deborah Madison's Vegetable Literacy

We don't have lettuces yet, but a light drizzle of this over slice Heirloom Tomatoes would be delicious.
1 large Shallot, finely diced
Sea Salt
1 TB aged Sherry or Red Wine Vinegar
1 1/2 tsp prepared Mustard
3 TB Walnut Oil, or more, as needed
Combine the shallot, 1/14 tsp salt, and vinegar in a bowl and let stand for 10 minutes. Whisk in the mustard and 3 TB oil and taste. If the vinaigrette is too sharp, whisk in a little more oil.

Pasta Alla Norma

Recipe from Ottolenghi Simple by Yotam

2 lb of Eggplant
1/2 cup Olive Oil
Salt and Black Pepper
5 Garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1-2 dried chiles (seeded if you don't want the heat)
28 oz peeled Plum Tomatoes, this calls for canned, but

I would use some of the Heirloom and some Cherry Tomatoes and I wouldn't bother with the peeling
5 large Oregano sprigs
1 tsp Sugar
10 oz Spaghetti
1 1/2 oz mature Pecorino Romano, shaved
1 cup Basil leaves, torn
Preheat oven to 450 F. Using a peeler and working from top to bottom of eggplant, shave off long alternating strips of peel so that they look striped. Cut crosswise into 1/2" slices and place in a bowl with 5 TB oil, 3/4 tsp Salt, and a generous grind of pepper. Mix well, then spread out on two large parchment-lined baking sheets. Roast for 30-35 minutes, until dark golden brown. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool. Put 2 TB of oil into a sauce pan and place over

medium-high heat. Add the garlic and chiles and fry for 1-2 minutes, stirring constantly, until the garlic is golden brown. Add the tomatoes and their juice, oregano, sugar, 1/2 tsp salt, and a grind of pepper. Decrease the heat to medium-low and cook for 10 minutes, until sauce is thick. Remove the oregano sprigs and stir in the eggplant. Set aside. Cook pasta

Sweet Potato Mash with Lime Salsa

Recipe from Ottolenghi Simple by Yotam Ottolenghi

Yotam suggests serving this as a side to grilled chops or sausages, or pan-fried tofu.

2 lb Sweet Potatoes, unpeeled and cut in half lengthwise
1/4 cup Olive Oil
Salt
1/4 cup Basil Leaves, finely chopped
1/4 cup Cilantro, finely chopped (might be interesting subbing in the Shiso here)
1/2 Garlic Clove, crushed
2 Limes, finely zest to get 2 tsp, then juice to get 1 TB Black Pepper

Preheat the oven to 425 F. Rub the sweet potatoes with 1 TB of oil and season with 1/4 tsp of salt. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet, cut side down, and roast for 30-35 minutes, until very soft. While the sweet potatoes are roasting, make the salsa. Put the remaining 3 TB of oil into a small bowl with the basil, cilantro, garlic, lime zest, lime juice, and a good pinch of salt and stir to combine. Once cool enough to handle, remove the skins from the sweet potatoes. They should slide off easily, but you can scoop the flesh out with a spoon if you prefer. Mash the flesh together with 1/8 tsp of salt and plenty of black pepper until smooth. Transfer to a platter, create divots in the surface, and spoon the salsa evenly over it. Serve hot.

This Week's Box List

*Basil
Eggplant
*Onions
*Sweet Potatoes
*Summer Squash
Shallots
*Cherry Tomatoes
*Heirloom Tomatoes
Cayenne Peppers *Spicy*
Lunchbox Peppers
Shiso
*Plums

* = Items in Box for 2