



WEEK OF NOVEMBER 11TH, 2019 #46/52

### It's That Time Of Year, Again

Cameron has been working on our crop plan for 2020. Part of his preparation has been to ask what you would like to see in the box. Quite a few of the responses were for items we already grow. The interesting thing is we will get an email from one of you telling us how much they love this veg or that one, and the next email will tell us they wish we never put it into the box. We all have our likes and dislikes.

I would very much like to see us improve our variety. Cameron and I have been looking at Jerusalem artichokes, but they are backordered until Oct 2020. There were a few things we were looking at that were not available due to seed crop failure. We saw that a couple of times, and it made us wonder if that is normal? Or is it going to be the "new" normal? Germinating seeds is a tricky business. Seeds like certain temperatures for germination, and certain temperatures for growing, some like a bit of cold, others like to be in the ground after the ground has warmed to at least x or y temp. Some plants need a certain number of daylight hours. It is definitely not as simple as grabbing those beautiful seed catalogues and excitedly ordering away.

Once we make our choices, then the work really begins. How far apart do you plant the transplants? Or can we direct seed? How many plants will we get in a bed? And how much will those plants produce? Will it take one bed or multiple for a week's worth of CSA boxes? Can we get two weeks out of one planting? If we plant extra beds is it a crop we might sell wholesale? Or is it something everyone else is growing? But then if we get too special with too many things, and no-one is familiar with it we won't sell much. I love crops that can be harvested and they will produce again, like tomatoes, or certain types of broccoli, etc. Obviously this makes a planting much more valuable, but it also saves us from having to till and work the land. That cuts down on diesel and tractor time and keeps the land productive longer; all good things. For me one of the hardest aspects of crop planning is the idea that you have to think so far ahead. It didn't occur to me that seeds would be out of stock or back ordered, or there would be crop failure. Silly me, so much to learn!

### Walking the Farm

Andrew and I took a quick walk out to the orchard last Friday evening. The first couple of beds are as you walk out were some of our summer favorites; basil, summer squash, melons and eggplant. The eggplants were recently mowed a few eggplants are left on the ground that will decompose and return to the soil.

But our destination was the orchard. We hope that we will have a good season for citrus. The trees are pretty loaded, which is such a sweet treat to look forward to in the cold season of winter. The pomelos, in particular, look pretty amazing. What is a pomelo you ask? It is a citrus from Southeast Asia. It is the largest fruit in the citrus family, and it is not a hybrid. Actually, it is believed that grapefruit is an accidental cross of pomelo and orange. The pomelo has a shockingly thick rind, which you will get to experience in a couple of months!

Moving right along in the orchard, and getting past the citrus, in the last row of trees, beyond the mulberries, are a few persimmon trees. Nigel planted them some years

back. He chose several different varieties because he wanted to see how they do, which ones might work best in our environment. These trees are sadly very neglected, but there is fruit out there. We have Hachiyas, Fuyus and American persimmons. The American Persimmon is much smaller and comes from the Southeastern US. They are really small compared to the Asian varieties. Another distinction, which Andrew and I experienced, they are extremely astringent when not fully ripe, the Asian varieties are non-astringent. Fuyus can be eaten while still crisp and it is sweet with no hint of astringency. But we tried one of the Americans and boy that was an experience. Apparently the tannins react with the proteins in your mouth and cause quite the reaction. I read a quote from Captain John Smith, which I thought was spot on: "If it not be ripe, it will draw a man's mouth awry in much torment".

In any case, we do have persimmons for you this week and next. They are not our's but coming from Vacaville Persimmon Farm and our friend's Cheryl and Tim. We had them last year and found they were truly delicious. We hope you enjoy them.

### Thanksgiving

I want to remind everyone that we switch up our deliveries the week of Thanksgiving. Everyone who normally gets a box on **Thursday** will be switched to **Tuesday**. Please keep that in mind, and for those of you who get a box on Wednesday, there is no change. The feasting holiday will be here in a blink, so get ahead of the work. You can bake, puree and freeze pumpkin or squash for pie fillings. You can even pre-sauté onions and garlic and freeze that as well. Make sure you have plenty of chicken stock on hand to help out with gravy. Here is a link to a recipe for [Make Ahead Turkey Gravy](#) that uses turkey wings and chicken stock. According to the recipe it will keep for 3 months in the freezer. Why not make the day a little easier?



# RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

## Confit Fennel

Recipe by Kathy Becthtel of [Italiaoutdoors](#)

This past Sunday we had a Sunday Supper on the Farm with chef Wyatt. Thank you to the members who came out and joined us, I had a wonderful time. And Chef Wyatt's meal was spectacular. One of the things he made was Confit Fennel which he used with Rockfish. But he also used the oil in the salad dressing. So if you struggle a little over the fennel, this is an excellent way to treat it.

The website has some great recommendations for using the fennel and the oil.

2 bulbs Fennel

3 cloves Garlic

Peel from one Lemon

1/8 tsp Red Pepper flakes

1 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Salt

Trim the stem end of the fennel, cut off any stalks and leaves, reserve the frond for garnish.

Discard any damaged or tough outer layers of fennel bulb. Slice fennel lengthwise 1/4". Remove the tough solid inner triangular core that is at the base of the bulb. Lay slices in a shallow roasting pan. Gently smash the garlic cloves and add to fennel.

Sprinkle with red pepper flakes and several strips of lemon peel,

being careful not to get the white pitch with the peel.

If you do get some pith, cut it away with a small pairing knife. Cover the fennel with olive oil - the amount will depend on the size/amount of fennel.

Season with salt and a few grates of black pepper.

Cover the pan with aluminum foil and roast slowly in a 325 F degree oven for one hour or until tender.

Allow fennel to cool in oil.

## Sweet Potato Red Curry with Bok Choy & Tofu

Sara Novak at [TLC](#) adapted from [Deborah Madison](#)

This recipe calls for Bok Choy, which we only have the family box this week. You could easily substitute with cabbage and some broccoli; even if you have bok choy in your box, they would make nice additions.

1 cup Brown Basmati Rice

2 cups plus 1/2 cup Water

1 tsp Salt

1 LB Sweet Potatoes, sliced in 3/4 inch wedges, skins still on

6 large Shallots, chopped

1 TB Peanut Oil plus more for frying

1 can organic Coconut Milk

2 tsp Red Curry Paste

1 1/2 TB Brown Sugar

2 tsp Soy Sauce

1 TB Corn Starch

1/2 cup Chopped Cilantro

4 Baby Bok Choy, cut lengthwise into fourths

7 oz firm Tofu, moisture removed and cut into 2 inch pieces

Sea Salt to taste

1 Lime, quartered

Cilantro for garnish

Rinse rice a few times while bringing 2 cups water to boil with 1 tsp salt. Add in rice and turn down to

simmer cooking for 35 to 40 minutes, stirring periodically. Add sweet potatoes to large pot and cover with water. Boil sweet potatoes for about 15 minutes, until a fork easily punctures the skin. At the same time, add shallots and peanut oil into a wide skillet and cook on medium high until softened a bit. Add in coconut milk, 1/2 cup water, red curry paste, brown sugar, soy sauce and corn starch and bring to a boil. Turn down to a simmer and cook for 10

minutes. Add in cilantro and bok choy and cook 3 more minutes.

Season with sea salt. Get the tofu going as well by adding 1 to 2 inches of peanut oil to a deep skillet or pot and frying it over medium high heat for about 5 minutes. Use a fork to turn the tofu to brown on all sides. This will take a few batches so be careful not to crowd the pot. When each batch is done, drain the grease over paper towels. Add sweet potatoes and tofu to the coconut milk mixture and cook for three more minutes. Serve atop rice garnished with limes and cilantro.

## This Week's Box List

\*Fennel

\*Persimmons from [Vacaville Persimmon Farm](#)

\*Acorn Squash

\*Sweet Potatoes

\*Green Cabbage

\*Turnip

\*Broccoli

Arugula

Garlic Chives

Rosemary

Bok Choy

Lettuce

\* = Items in Box for 2

## Stuffed Acorn Squash

I don't have a specific recipe for you, but rather a few suggestions.

First of all, I would like to share how I cook ALL winter squash, I pre-bake them. First, wash the squash well, dry, then pop it into a pre-heated oven (375 F) and bake. Depending on the size, it could be 10 minutes to almost 30. You are not fully cooking the squash, you just want it to get soft enough to cut and seed. Take out of the oven and allow to cool enough to handle, then cut in half and remove seeds. From this point on you do whatever, peel and cube to roast, or leave in halves and finish baking, or stuff and roast. You can also cube it and freeze it to use later.

For a very simple stuffed Acorn Squash meal, fill it with chili then bake until the squash is tender. Last couple of minutes top with cheese and bake until melted.

Another option, sauté turnips, in oil or butter until halfway tender, then add some cabbage and finish until both are cooked. You can even add the good looking greens from the turnips. Season with some fresh rosemary, salt and pepper to taste. You can mix this with some cooked quinoa or rice, add some chopped garlic chives. If you would like the mix a little wetter, add some chicken stock or vegetable broth. Roast the acorn squash to about half done, fill with this mixture and top with bread crumbs or cheese, or both. Parmesan and breadcrumbs with a bit more rosemary added in is a delicious combination. Finish off in the oven until the top is a bit crisp. Enjoy this with a salad for a simple meal.

[Amazing Simple Creamy Turnip Soup](#)  
[Turnip and Turnip Greens Soup](#)