



WEEK OF DECEMBER 9TH, 2019 #50/52



### Plastic Bags

Every day I read another article about how we are killing our planet with all the plastic we are using. When I started Drinkwell Softers I made the choice to go with glass bottles over plastic. For many years I sold them with a bottle deposit to make them returnable/reusable bottles, because it is the way I think we should do things. I have washed thousands of bottles. And even though we changed the bottle and don't do the deposit anymore, we still take bottles back, wash, sanitize and reuse when we get them. All of our value added products are packaged in glass or aluminum bottles. We use shredded office paper and reused packaging materials that we get with shipments delivered to the farm to reduce with our shipping. We try to do the best we can for our environment, but there is always room for improvement.

It is more difficult to change from using plastic to paper bags with produce. We try to limit it to as little as we can but sometimes it is necessary to use. Over the years we have learned that stone fruit doesn't hold up in the paper bags, they seem to do better in the plastic bags. We have put lunchbox peppers in paper bags instead of the plastic clamshells. We switched the cherry tomatoes back to the green baskets, and I hope to switch those, and our strawberries to the paper cartons. As we move through the seasons and the items in the box switch out, Ignacio is learning what goes in paper or plastic, so this week the citrus will be in paper bags, rather than plastic. The extras are pretty tricky because we have to put labels on your items. Some of the produce is too wet to go into a paper bag. Clearly there is no perfect solution, but could we do better?

My quest for a more eco-friendly, less wasteful solution to plastic bags has led me to exploring cloth produce bags. There are several options, cotton mesh, organic cotton, muslin bags, mesh made from recycled plastics etc., but of course all of them are pretty costly. The upside is they are all washable and re-usable. The the cheapest I could find for a decent size would cost us close to \$1.25 per bag. That might not seem like much but \$1.25 times 500+ each week, and that is if we only use 1 per box, can add up to a lot of extra expense. If the share has 2 items requiring more than a paper bag then we would need over 1,000. This extra expense could run us anywhere from \$600 to over a \$1,000.00 in a week. It's a serious reality check, but how do we place a price on reducing our contribution to the overwhelming problem that plastic bags are causing? The simple fact is, the farm cannot afford to fully cover this type of additional expense.

So I am bringing this to you. Is this something we should pursue? Would you be willing to meet us part way with an increase to our share price by a \$1.00 to \$1.50 per box? There will be times when the box doesn't need a plastic or alternative bag, but then again there will be times when it requires 2, so I am hoping it would balance out. If you are ordering extras

and do not want plastic bags we could set up an option to purchase a reusable bag. It is so hard knowing the lifestyle we are fortunate enough to live is having seriously negative impacts on our world. We do not use the "bio-bags" because they are not good for produce, they are not meant to store fruits or vegetables and you can't wash them to reuse. On top of that, they don't bio-degrade as quickly as they say they do. What do you think? If you have another solution I would love to hear it. Please text me at 530-554-3971 or email me at [drinkwellsofters@gmail.com](mailto:drinkwellsofters@gmail.com) and let me know your thoughts. Would an extra \$1.50 per box be worth it to you? Or would you be ok with a reduced amount of plastic bags and that we are working toward using less? Thank you for participating in this quest!

### Eggs

As mentioned in last Thursday's email, we are suffering an egg shortage. At the moment the girls are laying less than 30 dozen a day, which might squeak us by for the eggs that have already been paid for. So we have turned eggs off at the moment. That means no one can order more eggs until we can build up just a little bit of back stock. If you have already paid for eggs, you will get them. Andrew and I will be monitoring egg production closely. These stormy short days really take a toll and the girls are not happy. They don't like the wind and they certainly don't like the shorter days. Once they begin their molt it is not necessarily possible to bring them back out.

#### Important Reminders From Andrew

This is a reminder that we will not be delivering boxes on Christmas week, from 12/22 to 12/29. We will have CSA boxes the following week, but **Wednesday boxes will be delivered on Tuesday 12/31**. Thursday boxes will be delivered on Thursday, 1/2.

If you receive a box every other week and will receive a box this week, 12/9-14, your next box would be on 1/8. If you would like to switch your schedule please me know.

If you are every other week and get a box 12/16-21, your next box will be 12/30-1/4.

A couple of reminders:

Please check the sign in sheet when you get to your site to see what you have.. Be sure to take only the items listed next to your name. If it is not the amount or items you think it should be (or if your name is not on the list), please take only what is listed and call or text me (707) 999-1150.

Please make sure to grab the right sized box, the Family Box, is longer but not as tall and the Box for 2 is taller and shorter and should have a label that says Box for 2 on it.

We can reuse the CSA boxes, please leave them flattened and neatly stacked at your site.

If you have any questions please call, text or email me.

# RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

## Sweet Potato Latkes

*Recipe from Gourmet December 2001*

Tis The Season for Latkes, and sweet potatoes make delicious ones! This recipe makes about 26.

1 lb sweet potatoes, peeled and coarsely grated  
2 scallions, finely chopped  
1/3 cup all-purpose flour  
2 large eggs, lightly beaten  
1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
3/4 cup vegetable oil  
Stir together potatoes, scallions, flour, eggs, salt, and pepper. Heat oil in a deep 12-inch nonstick skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking. Working in batches of 4, spoon 1/8 cup potato mixture per latke into oil and flatten to 3-inch diameter with a slotted spatula. Reduce heat to moderate and cook until golden, about 1 1/2 minutes on each side. Transfer latkes with spatula to paper towels to drain.

## Arugula, Fennel and Orange Salad

*Recipe from Williams Sonoma*

If you made this to go with your Sweet Potato Latkes you would have a pretty nice, simple meal.

1/4 cup (2 fl oz./60 ml) fresh Orange Juice  
2 Tbs fresh Lemon Juice  
2 tsp. grated Orange Zest  
2 Tbs Extra-Virgin Olive Oil  
2 Tbs Light Vegetable Oil, like Grape Seed  
2 tsp Dijon Mustard  
1/2 tsp dried Tarragon  
1 Shallot, chopped

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

1 large Fennel bulb  
3 large Blood Oranges, Navel Oranges or a combination  
4 cups (6 oz./185 g) Arugula

To make the vinaigrette, in a small bowl, whisk together the orange juice, lemon juice, orange zest, olive oil, canola oil, mustard, tarragon and shallot. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside. Cut off the stems and feathery fronds of the fennel bulb and remove any bruised or discolored outer layers. Cut the bulb in half lengthwise and cut out the core. Cut the bulb halves crosswise into slices 3/8 inch (1 cm) thick and then cut the slices into 1-inch (2.5-cm) lengths. Working with 1 orange at a time, and using a sharp knife, cut a slice off both ends of the orange to reveal the flesh. Stand the orange upright on a cutting board and slice off the peel and pith in strips, following the contour of the fruit. Cut the orange in half crosswise, place

each half cut side down, and thinly slice vertically to create half-moons. Repeat with the remaining oranges. Place the fennel and arugula in a large serving bowl, add half of the vinaigrette and toss gently to coat thoroughly. Arrange the orange slices on top. Drizzle with the remaining vinaigrette and serve immediately. Serves 8 to 10.

## This Week's Box List

\*Leeks  
\*Fennel  
\*Chard  
\*Arugula  
\*Mandarin  
\*Spaghetti or Carnival Squash  
\*Sweet Potatoes  
Red Cabbage  
Radishes or turnips  
Red Russian Kale  
Bok Choy  
Cilantro

\* = Items in Box for 2

## Braised Eggs with Leek and Za'atar

*Recipe from Ottolenghi's Simple*

Ok, honestly I wasn't looking through one of my many Ottolenghi books, I was searching for something original to do with leeks. Can I help it if Yotam is always coming to my rescue? In any case, this recipe calls for spinach, but I am suggesting you switch to chard, since that is what we have in the share this week. 2 TBs unsalted Butter  
2 TBS Olive Oil, divided  
2 extra-large Leeks (or 4 small), trimmed and thinly sliced (about 6 cups)

Kosher salt

Freshly ground Black Pepper

1 1/4 cups Vegetable broth

1/2 small Preserved Lemon, seeds discarded, skin and flesh finely chopped  
1 teaspoon cumin seeds, lightly toasted and crushed  
7 oz Baby Spinach leaves (about 7 packed cups) OR Chard, washed well

6 large Eggs

3 1/4 ounces Feta Cheese, crumbled into 3/4-inch pieces (about 1 generous cup)

1 TB Za'atar.

Heat the butter and 1 tablespoon of the oil into a large sauté pan with a lid and place over medium-high heat. Once the butter starts to foam, add the leeks, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, and plenty of pepper. Fry, stirring frequently, until the leeks are soft, about 3 minutes. Add the vegetable broth, lemon, and cumin. Bring to a boil and cook until most of the broth has evaporated, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the spinach and fold in until wilted, about 1 minute. Reduce the heat to medium. Use a large spoon to make 6 indentations in the mixture. Break 1 egg into each space.

Sprinkle the eggs with a pinch of salt, dot the feta around the eggs, then cover the pan.

Simmer until the egg whites are set but the yolks are still runny, 4 to 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, mix the za'atar with the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil. Brush the za'atar over the eggs. Serve at once, straight from the pan.