



WEEK OF MARCH 2ND, 2020 #10/52

News From The Farm

Last week it hit 80 degrees on the farm and it was February! Weather life is so unpredictable. Sadly that means our Romanesco is not happy, nor is the daikon, and the cauliflower. They are winter crops and 80 just doesn't feel much like winter. I was looking at old newsletter stories from March 2009 and found this great article Nigel wrote about compost:

After each crop we spread 10 cubic yards per acre of compost. The compost is made of food waste coming from San Francisco and Oakland. We have been using it since 2000 and it works well for us. The compost facility is south of Dixon so the trucking cost is relatively low. Each year I try to budget more money for compost.

We have been asking the compost supplier, Jepson Prairie

Organics, to add one ton of limestone per 10 cubic yards. This enables us to get two jobs done at a time and the compost seems to flow better also. Our soil needs lots of calcium and we have some hungry calcium loving crops such as tomatoes.



It has been years since we spread compost or calcium. Nigel found that with the rotation program we have going with our chickens we had gotten to a point where we no longer needed to add compost and many years back he also stopped adding calcium.

Fennel

These days I mostly think of fennel as a vegetable I cook with, but before I was on the farm it was an herb I used quite frequently, usually in its seed form. Fennel seed tea helped my extremely colicky baby, and was part of an eye wash I used on him when he had eye infections. Now that I mostly eat fennel in the bulb form, I had forgotten about the medicinal properties of the plant, and that got me wondering about the history of fennel. So I did a little research and here is what I learned:

Fennel as a medicinal plant has been used since ancient times, by the Egyptians, the Chinese, the Greeks and all throughout the Middle Ages. The ancient Chinese used it as a snake bite remedy. During the Middle Ages people would hang it over their doors to protect those inside from evil spirits, and the seeds were put into keyholes to keep ghosts out. Fennel seeds were considered an appetite suppressant. In the household of King Edward I of England, they used it to help them get through the church mandated fasting days, and when the Puritans came to the New World they brought that tradition with them. They would put

fennel seeds into a handkerchief to nibble on during long church services and that is why fennel seed were referred to as "meetin' seeds". Fennel is native to Southern Europe, most likely first cultivated in Greece or Italy. Florence fennel, the variety we eat today, wasn't developed until the 17th century. Although it is often referred to as Fennel Root, it really isn't the root we eat but the bottom end of the stalk swollen into a bulb.

Wine Maker Dinner and Strawberry Days

I am really excited to about our next Sunday Supper with Chef Wyatt, and wine maker Robert Pitacsi from St. Romedius Wine, March 29th. Each course will be paired with one of St. Romedius' delicious wines. Chef Wyatt and I had dinner with the Pitacsi's a week ago, tasted all the wines and came up with a delicious menu. A few years back Milli and Robert celebrated their anniversary with a night in The Nest and dinner here at Eatwell. The next morning they came into the farm house for breakfast and we all had the best time together. A

year or so ago they came back for another night in the Nest. By then Robert (who was working as assistant winemaker at Far Niente)



had just released his first wine under the St. Romedius label. Robert and Milli both grew up in Danville and feature grapes grown in the Lamorinda AVA - Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda. The wines are unfiltered, and naturally fermented, so no added yeast is used, and they are delicious. Robert and Milli will be pouring during this dinner and sharing their stories and tasting notes. This is a great opportunity to pick up some delicious wines, they will be taking orders. The dinner will be 4 to 5 courses, starting with soup, small plate of parmesan crusted turnip and scallops, salad, and probably a pork and vegetable dish, naturally featuring the best of what is coming out of the fields. We'll wrap the evening up with some delicious Eatwell dessert. There is only room for 20 seats around the table, so if you are interested get your tickets soon.

RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

Pickled Fennel

Recipe from Food52

Since I was talking about Fennel on the flip side I thought it would be a good idea to include a recipe that takes full advantage of the whole thing, bulb, stalks and fronds! If you wanted to you could add some turnip, green garlic, spring onion or radish to the mix here. As long as you make enough brine to cover they would all be a delicious addition.

1 1/2 TB whole Fennel seeds
1 tsp whole Coriander seeds
1/2 tsp whole Cumin seeds
1/4 cup Sugar
3 TB Salt
2 cups Water
2-2 1/2 cups Apple Cider Vinegar

1/2 Lemon cut into 4 or 5 slices
1 large Fennel Bulb with 3 inches of Stalk and Fronds
Toast all the seeds in a pan till fragrant. Place water, vinegar, toasted seeds, sugar, salt, and lemon slices into a pot and bring to a boil. Meanwhile, slice the stalks and fronds off the bulb. Trim the stalks and use a vegetable peeler to remove the more fibrous outer skin, then slice them in half. Reserve the fronds. Slice the bulb down the middle from top to bottom. Remove the core. Separate the fennel by its natural layers, then slice each layer into 1-inch wide strips. I also like to take a vegetable peeler to the outermost layer since that can also tend to be a little more fibrous than the tender inner layers. Once the brine is boiling, remove it from the heat. Add the fennel and fronds. Allow to cool, uncovered. Once completely cool, store the fennel and brine (being sure to keep all the seeds but remove the lemon) in a jar or air-tight container and place in the fridge. Wait 24 hours before eating. I don't know how long they stay good for, they never last long enough for me to find out.

Easy Kale Lasagna

Recipe found on Food and Wine

Olive Oil, for coating baking dish
9 to 12 Lasagna Noodles
1 cup Ricotta Cheese
1 Egg
1/4 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
Zest of 1 fresh Lemon
1/2 tsp Sea Salt, or to taste
Fresh cracked Black Pepper, to taste
24 oz Tomato Sauce
1 bunch Kale, destemmed and chopped
16 oz grated Mozzarella Cheese
Preheat oven to 375°. Lightly coat a 2-quart baking dish with olive oil and set aside. Cook lasagna noodles until al dente according to package instructions. Rinse under cold water until cool. Lay the cooked pasta flat and set aside. In a medium bowl, combine the ricotta cheese,

egg, Parmigiano-Reggiano, lemon zest, salt and pepper. Set aside. Spread a light layer of tomato sauce on the bottom of the baking dish. Lay 3 to 4 lasagna noodles lengthwise over the sauce. Layer one-third of the remaining tomato sauce over the lasagna noodles and then layer half of the ricotta mixture. Layer half of the kale over the ricotta and then spread one-third of the mozzarella cheese. Repeat this pattern: noodles, sauce, ricotta cheese, kale and mozzarella cheese. Add a final layer of lasagna noodles and then add the remaining tomato sauce and remaining mozzarella cheese. Bake lasagna for about 45 minutes or until the top cheese is melted and golden.

This Week's Box List

*Spring Onions
*Green Garlic
*Red Russian Kale
*Fennel
*Mandarin
Pomelo
Radishes
Parsley
*Romanesco
Spinach
*Turnips

* = Items in Box for 2

Spicy Roasted Romanesco With Lemon And Capers

Recipe from Zenbelly

This recipe was shared on our Eatweller's Slack group a few weeks back by member Stephen P. Hey Stephen and Jill, thanks for the share! This is such a simple dish and I think it would pair well with salmon and maybe some Parmesan Crusted Smashed Turnips from last week's recipes.

1 head Romanesco, cut into florets
1/4 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil, divided
1/4 tsp Sea Salt
1 TB Lemon juice
1 tsp Lemon Zest
1 TB Capers, minced
1 tsp Red Pepper flakes
Freshly ground Black Pepper
Preheat the oven to 425 F. On a baking sheet, toss the romanesco with the sea salt and half of the olive oil. Roast for 10 minutes, flip, and roast for another 10, or until nicely browned and softened. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine the remaining olive oil, lemon juice, lemon zest, capers, red pepper flakes, and some freshly ground black pepper. Once the romanesco is done, toss with the dressing and serve.

Additional Recipes

- Braised Tofu with Turnips, Spring Onions, and Green Garlic from Sun Basket
- Roasted Radishes and Sautéed Kale with Citrus Salt from Grab a Plate
- Mandarin and Fennel Salad from Taste

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