



WEEK OF AUGUST 3RD, 2020 #32/52



### Dino Kale

We have had a truly amazing run with Dino Kale this year. It was planted many months ago and is still growing. Kale certainly prefers much cooler temps, between 55 and 75 degrees. Our close to 100 degree weather is well past that, so it is amazing to see it out there. At this time of year, it is really struggling, and because of that, you really see how it got the name Dinosaur Kale, it is looking rather prehistoric.



### A Lavender Chicken Home

The chicks that arrived back in May are growing so fast, we are getting ready to move them outside. Bringing a flock in during the Spring months has turned out to be much better than what we had done the last few years, which was to get them in November. During the winter months we have to run lights in those houses for a very long time, which costs a fortune. But these Spring girls only needed lights for the first two weeks. Plus, in the dry and warmer months, they are far less likely to get sick, therefore we have less loss. And it appears they are growing much faster. They are literally piled on top of each other against their screen door wanting to go outside.

So where to put them? I have been giving this a lot of thought and as we are heading straight for the winter months I am wanting to plan our chicken locations better this year. Having the girls way out on the far reaches of the farm is really hard for Agustin and his crew to get

food out to them and collect eggs, especially when the ground is saturated from the rain and muddy. My plan for this winter is



to make sure all of our chickens are up closer to the front end of the farm. I spoke with Agustin this morning and we agreed the young flock will move into our first growing field, for now in the area between the two fields of lavender. There is a very large open space and we will start to irrigate it some to green it up a bit. I hope we can get fencing put up all around the outside perimeter of the lavender so the girls can

actually run around in the lavender if they want. That might turn out to be a bad idea if they end up laying a lot of eggs in there instead of in their nesting boxes. But I am not quite as afraid to make mistakes as I have been in the past, and if it turns out to be a bad idea, we will move the fencing inside the lavender.

Later in the season, the house will move over to the other side of the lavender where we currently grow our basil and a lot of the summer squash. Of course that won't happen until we are done harvesting those crops. This will keep our largest flock really close to the top end of the farm. The rest of the birds will move into field 4, where we have already started growing pasture for them. I wrote about that pasture plan a few weeks back when I made the trip up to Grass Valley to pick up the seed. This morning I went out to check on it and it seems to be coming in pretty nicely, considering this isn't really the optimal time to

plant pasture seed. It is really too hot, but as I said earlier, I am learning, and sometimes you learn best from the mistakes you make. Planning space for pasture and chickens is actually pretty complicated and tricky and you really have to think months out. This process has taught me to look at the farm in a different way. Where do we like to plant what and when? What is the irrigation set up in a particular field? With regard to the chickens, can I make Agustin's life a little easier by ensuring they are closer in during the wet months? Is a field set up better for

drip irrigation? No matter where we decide to overwinter the chickens we will always gamble against mother nature and the

weather, if it is a really long wet winter it will be hard to move them out of there to their next spot. Since that first field is where we like to plant basil, will we have space at the right time for us to get it planted next year? But we will solve that piece of the puzzle next spring. For now, I am feeling pretty happy with my chicken plan and most importantly, I don't think we will have any egg shortage this coming winter.



# RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

## Thoughts From My Kitchen

The other night Lupe, Jose's wife, brought me some dinner, which included grilled, cheese-stuffed Gypsy Peppers. They were so delicious, and what a simple thing to make. She used a Jack style cheese. I grew up enjoying tomato salad with finely chopped chives. It is something I still enjoy, and find I turn to them more often than topping with fresh basil. If you haven't tried this alternative, it is a great way to enjoy the garlic chives. They are also delicious in scrambled eggs or scrambled tofu. We have been eating loads of shishito peppers and onions. We bring home lots of them from the market because we have so many on the plants we are sending tons down and not selling quite that much. The other day we slowly sautéed two or three of those giant onions, on low for a good long while. I threw in a good handful of our cherry tomatoes to add some sweetness and help with caramelization. Then added lots of chopped up shishitos and garlic. Continued to cook it low and slow in a mix of olive oil and butter, until the onions were just starting to brown and the peppers got really soft. Then added a pack of Avdis ground beef and cooked that until well browned. Gave it a good few shakes of Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper, and ate it over rice, with tomato salad on the side. It was delicious, satisfying, and excellent leftover. Using that much onion and peppers really stretched that one lb of meat.

## Grilled Summer Squash, Za'atar & Cherry tomato Confit

Recipes from *Gjelina, Cooking From Venice California* by Travis Lett

This recipe is actually 3 recipes. I decided to include the extra two since one of them uses tomatoes which we have in this week's box. Regarding a grill, I don't actually have one, but I do have a cast iron grill pan, which I often use in situations like this.

1 lb mixed Summer Squash, cut into 3/4" thick slices  
1/4 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
Kosher Salt

Freshly ground Black Pepper

\*2 TB California Za'atar, recipe below

\*\*1/2 cup Cherry Tomato confit, recipe below

2 TB Red Wine Vinegar

1/4 cup fresh Mint leaves, cut into thin ribbons

Prepare a hot grill. Meanwhile, on a baking sheet, spread out the squash slices in a single layer and drizzle with half the olive oil, turning to coat both sides. Season with salt and pepper and let stand at room temperature until the grill is ready. Put the squash slices on the hottest part of the grill and cook until seared on the bottom, about 4 minutes. Turn and cook until well seared on the other side, 2 to 3 minutes longer. The squash should be cooked through, but not mushy. In a large bowl, toss the grilled squash slices with the za'atar, tomato confit, vinegar, and mint. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to a serving platter. Serve warm.

## \*California Za'Atar

This recipe goes with the Grilled Squash and it makes about 1 cup.

2 TB Pepitas, raw hulled pumpkin seeds

1/4 tsp Coriander Seeds

1/2 cup young Carrot Tops

1/2 cup fresh flat-Leaf Parsley leaves

1/2 Shallot, minced

Zest of 1 Orange

Zest of 1 Lemon, plus juice of 1/2 lemon

2 Garlic cloves

1 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Good Salt

2TB fresh grated Romano Cheese

1 TB Balsamic Vinegar

In a small, dry frying pan over medium heat, toast the pepitas just until fragrant and beginning to brown, 3 to 5 minutes.

Remove from the heat and let cool before grinding to a fine powder in a spice grinder or with a mortar and pestle. Fill a large bowl with cold water and swish the carrot tops around to loosen the dirt. Repeat until the tops are clean. Remove them from the water, sandpit dry or spin them dry in a salad spinner. Chop the carrot tops and

parsley finely. In a medium bowl,

combine the carrot tops and parsley with the shallot, orange zest, lemon zest and toasted coriander seeds.

Using a microplane grater, grate the garlic into the mixture, and stir in the olive oil. Taste and season with salt. Allow to stand at room temp for about 30 minutes. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 week. Add the romano, toasted pepitas, vinegar and lemon juice to the carrot-top mixture just before serving.

## \*\*Cherry Tomato Confit

The original recipe is double these quantities, but I sized it down to accommodate the

1 pint Cherry Tomatoes, stemmed

1 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil, plus more as needed

2 Garlic cloves, smashed

1/4 cup Basil leaves

1 1/2 tsp Salt

2 spring fresh Thyme OR skip the plain salt and use Eatwell Thyme Salt instead

Preheat oven to 350. Bring a pot of water to boil over high heat. Prepare an ice water bath by filling a large bowl with ice water. Use a paring knife to scar a small X in the bottom of each tomato. Plunge the tomatoes into the boiling water for 20 seconds, and immediately transfer them to the ice-water bath. Work in batches, if necessary, until all the tomatoes have been blanched. When the cherry tomatoes are cool, remove them from the water. With your fingers, gently slip the tomatoes out of their skins and place them in a single layer in a baking dish. Pour the olive oil over the tomatoes and add the garlic, basil, salt, and thyme. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes, or until the oil is hot but the tomatoes remaining vibrant and whole. Let cool completely. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, completely covered with olive oil to prevent air from reaching them.

## This Week's Box List

Onions

\*Tomatoes

Garlic chives

\*Potatoes

\*Basil

Leeks

\*Nectarines or Peaches

\*Zucchini

Shishito Peppers

\*Gypsy or Bell Peppers

Chard

\*Plums

\* = Items in Box for 2