





WEEK OF OCTOBER 12, 2020 #42/52

Farm Wanderings

Sometimes I am really surprised by what I find out on the farm. One morning I was in the orchard and



spotted this little rose bush growing in the line of fruit trees. It caught my eye because it is covered in gorgeous hips. How the heck did it get there? I know Nigel didn't plant it. We do have dogwood roses planted years ago as part of our hedgerow on the West side of the farm, but this rose is at the other end of the orchard. Sometimes I will spot a single sunflower standing tall and proud in one our fields. That I get. But roses? Figs also seem to be moving about on the farm; we now have a couple of "volunteers" in the event space, and another one growing outside the office. I am sure that is happening because so many birds and animals love them.

One of the things I have learned living on the farm is life wants to happen. Nature's inclination is to fight hard for survival, really hard. We will see that in the recovery of the redwoods in our beautiful forests that burned this summer. Everywhere we go, if we let nature do what it does, we will find life happens. Because our farm is so diverse, we are a perfect home



for many native bees, and some incredible butterflies, and loads and loads of birds. It is an amazing example of nature doing what nature wants more than anything, and that is to thrive.

This past weekend I watched the movie *Kiss The Ground*. If you haven't seen it, I think it is worth your time.

One of the key figures in the film is rancher/farmer Gabe Brown from <u>Browns Ranch</u>. Nigel took a few classes from Gabe at farming conferences we attended. He was so impressed with Gabe's work, it changed how we put together our pasture system for healthier chickens and soil. One of the things we learned from Gabe came from an experiment he did on his ranch where he planted fields with single varieties of pasture, plus one field where he grew a mix, a wide variety of pasture plants. The difference was pretty astounding, the "community" of plants did so much better than the mono-crop fields. That taught us the importance of community and diversity out in the field.

Nature can teach us so much if only we take the time to step back, listen, watch and learn. Life truly does want to happen, and when we let nature do her thing, it can happen quickly. That is what should give us hope for our future. But we can't just sit back and rely on Mother Nature to take care of business, we must turn that hope into action, because even though she will work fast, we need to stop working against her. I bring this up because too often we feel helpless, making it hard to move forward, but the truth is we



aren't helpless. Your choice to support a CSA farm is a really big step. Subscribing to our CSA means you are supporting a farm that grows over 150 crops each year, so much of our farm is planted year round. Yes, we let some fields rest, because even the earth needs a break, but we don't leave hundreds or thousands of acres of barren soil to blow or wash away. We let most of our resting fields just go, covered in weeds, until we are closer to using them. We are getting back on track with our pasture planting, and I hope this mix will improve our egg production while playing an important role in feeding and improving the health of our soil. As for Kiss The Ground, parts of the movie could be a little depressing, but I found it filled with promise and answers to change our current trajectory. There is so much to learn, but what was so exciting, was the realization that there are steps we can take to make our world a better place, and all of us are playing a part in that work.

RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

Sweet and Spicy Roasted Tofu and Squash

Recipe from NYT Cooking by Melissa Clark

This recipe makes 2-4 servings and takes about 1 hour.

1 (14-ounce) package extra-firm tofu, drained

2 lb Acorn Squash, halved and seeded

1 1/2 TB Soy Sauce, more to taste

½ tsp Sriracha or other hot sauce

Kosher Salt, and Black Pepper

¼ cup Peanut Oil

1 TB Honey

1 TB Toasted Sesame Seeds

2 TB chopped Celery Leaves or Cilantro

Drain tofu and slice into 1/2" thick slabs. Cut each slab in half. Arrange tofu on a large baking sheet or several plates lined with several layers of paper towels with another layer of paper towels on top. Weigh down tofu with another baking sheet or more plates topped with a heavy cookbook or cans. Let stand for 20 minutes. Pat tofu dry. While tofu

drains, heat oven to 425 degrees. Cut squash into 1/2" thick half-moons. Cut each slice in half again. In a small bowl, whisk together soy sauce, sriracha and a pinch of salt. Whisk in peanut oil. Spoon 3 tbs of mixture into a separate bowl and reserve. Whisk honey into original mixture. Spread squash out on a large baking sheet and pour honey-soy mixture over it. Sprinkle squash lightly with salt and pepper and toss well. Roast until bottoms are golden brown, about 20 minutes. Flip and roast until uniformly golden and soft, about 10 minutes more. Transfer squash to a large bowl. Adjust the heat to broil and position a rack just below the heating element. Toss tofu with reserved soy mixture and arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet (you can use the same one you used for the squash). Cook until crispy and golden, about 2 minutes/

side. Toss hot tofu with squash, sesame seeds and celery leaves, adding more soy sauce if you like.

Garlic Chive Sauce

Original Recipe from My Gourmet Connections

I altered this recipe for Garlic Chives rather than regular chives. I have reduced the garlic to 1 clove rather than 2. This sauce is served with the Potato Cheese Pierogi recipe. 3 TB Butter

2 cloves Garlic, finely chopped

2 TB Flour

1-3/4 cup Chicken OR Veg Groth (either homemade or lowsodium)

1/2 tsp Salt

1/4 tsp White Pepper

1/4 cup Sour Cream

1/3 cup Garlic Chives

Heat the butter in a large pan over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook, stirring constantly until it softens and turns light golden. Be careful not to allow it to crisp or brown. Add the flour, and continue stirring until it is well incorporated into the butter and garlic. Continue cooking, stirring constantly, until the flour begins to turn golden yellow. Gradually stir in the chicken broth, blending it with the flour mixture until smooth, creamy and thickened. Add salt and pepper, taste and adjust if necessary. Whisk in the sour cream and blend until smooth. Add the fresh chives just before serving.

Potato and Cheese Pierogi

Recipe from My Gourmet Connections

I love pierogi, and thought it would be fun to play with this recipe using our sweet potatoes or a combo of regular

potatoes and sweet potato. So if you are daring, give it a try and do half/half or all sweet potatoes.

3-1/2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting

3 large Eggs

2 TB Sour Cream

3/4 to 1 cup Water

For the filling:

1-1/2 lbs Baking Potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch slices

2 TB Unsalted Butter

1 TB Extra-Virgin Olive Oil

1 small Onion, chopped

1 clove Garlic, minced

1/4 teaspoon dried Thyme OR use some Eatwell Farm

Thyme Salt

This Week's Box List

*Chard

*Sweet Potatoes

Potatoes

*Winter Squash

Leeks

*Parsley or Basil

*Onions

Padron Peppers

*Garlic Chives

Napa Cabbage or Broccoli

Radishes

*Pomegranates from Twin Girls

* = Items in Box for 2

3/4 to 1 cup grated dry Farmer's cheese

Salt and freshly ground Pepper to taste

For the finished dish:

1/2 stick butter, cut into 1 tablespoon portions

In a large bowl or mixer, combine the flour,

eggs, sour cream and 1/2 cup of water. Beat the eggs as you mix and gradually add the rest of the water until the mixture is combined. Turn the dough onto a well floured surface. Knead it gently, using a dropping technique (lift the dough from the surface and drop it down). Knead only until the ingredients are blended and the dough is smooth and slightly sticky, about 3 to 5 minutes. Be careful not to over work the dough. Wrap the dough ball in plastic wrap and let it rest for at least 20 to 30 minutes while you prepare the filling. Put the potatoes in a medium pot and add just enough cold, salted water to cover them. Bring to a boil and cook until the potatoes are soft, about 20 minutes. Sweet Potatoes will cook faster! While the potatoes cook, melt the butter and oil over medium heat in a large sauté pan. Add the onion, garlic and thyme, cooking until the onion turns translucent, about 2

minutes. Lower the heat and continue

cooking until onions caramelize slightly, about 20 minutes. You may need to add a bit more butter as the onion and garlic mixture cooks. Season with salt and pepper to taste and set aside to cool. When the potatoes are soft, drain them in a colander and lightly press out the remaining moisture. Return them to the pot, remove from heat and add the cooled onion mixture and the cheese. Mash them just until blended and large lumps are gone. Season again with salt and pepper to taste. Set aside to cool while you roll out the pierogi dough. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. With lightly floured hands, pinch off tablespoon sized portions of the dough and roll them into balls. The balls should be about 1-1/2 inches in diameter, yielding about 3 dozen total. On a well floured surface, gently roll each ball with a rolling pin until about 1/8 inch thick and 3-1/2 inches round. Cover the finished rounds with a damp towel so they don't dry out while you're working. Once your rounds are rolled out, hold each in the palm of your hand, filling the center of it with a generous tablespoon of the potato mixture. Gently fold the round in half, pulling the edges away and pinching them firmly shut to enclose the filling. Be sure the edges are sealed by working from one end to the other. As you work, set your filled pierogi aside on a floured surface and cover them with plastic wrap. Working in batches, drop no more than 6 pierogi at a time into the boiling water. After they float back to the surface, allow them to cook another 2 to 4 minutes. Remove the pierogi with a slotted spoon and place on a towel to drain and cool. To finish the dish, heat a tablespoon or two of butter in a pan over medium heat and briefly sauté them in batches until they are slightly crispy and brown on the exterior. Transfer to a serving dish and top with Sour

Cream Garlic Chive Sauce.