



WEEK OF NOVEMBER 9TH, 2020 #46/52

### Dreamers

Nigel was a dreamer, but he was a dreamer who acted. He always said as long as you put one foot forward you are going somewhere, you can change your direction, but if you do nothing, you are guaranteed to get nothing. And so a man who had a great career as a BBC radio engineer, gave up a path he actually enjoyed, to follow a passion he knew he loved. He dared to dream. He went to agricultural college and became a farmer because that is where his heart and soul led him. Eventually that brought him to California, and today we literally reap the rewards of his dreams and his passions.

I am writing about him today because yesterday we harvested the two hands of bananas that grew in front of our house. One of my most cherished memories of Nigel was the evening we harvested the very first hand of bananas. He planted those trees with the joy and wonder of a child. Would they grow? Would they



survive the cold snaps in the winter? If they grew, would they ever produce fruit? How he wanted those bananas to grow, and grow they did. It turns out the retaining walls on the south side of our home keep the trees protected enough that

they won't die off in the winter. That first year we harvested bananas the week of Thanksgiving. I froze some and made him a "Chunky Monkey" Trifle for his birthday on Christmas Eve. That man was literally gleeful, and the trifle? Oh yes, that was very good.

Nigel taught me so much. It's ok to do B+ work as long as you get it all done on time. Don't let perfection keep you from completing your tasks. It's ok to try something different when everyone is telling you that it isn't the way to do it. Just try. We can learn as much from our mistakes as we do from our successes, and quite often even more. He taught me that we all live with fear, but the movers and the shakers in this world, have learned to not let fear control them. Don't dwell on the failures, but deeply enjoy your successes. So in a few days, once the bananas have ripened, we will thoroughly enjoy a success.

### The Season's Changed

And just like that, we went from warm nights to cold. On that first chilly morning I looked out toward the rising sun and saw clouds. It was beautiful, and I enjoyed the change. We could really do with a bit of rain, but that little bit of cloud was never going to

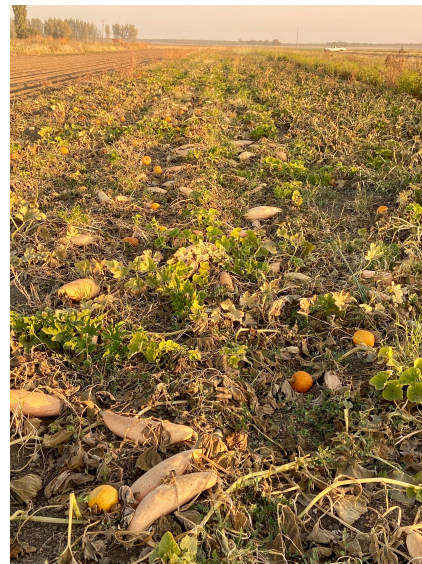
bring it. We have a lot of crops growing out in our fields that are thirsty for water, and would really prefer the temps to cool down. As our Indian summers get hotter, the window for planting is getting shorter and shorter. August and September can



be too hot to plant them. Now October is getting hotter, and year after year not a drop of rain. Even November can be quite hot. But day length plays a big factor with your fall plantings. Before living on the farm I never thought about the hours of sunlight and how that would affect plant growth. Shorter days equal less growth. We race against the clock of shorter days while dealing with hot days and no rain. And then it feels like in a blink there are freezing temps at night which can damage young crops. As I am writing we just hit 32 degrees, so I went outside to see if there was any frost. There wasn't much but I did find ice cycles where a hose was left on misting. A little gentle rain right now would be perfect. And as long as I am asking, let it always rain at night, when our guys aren't out there working, and let the rain be gentle, never flooding, and let the sun shine during the day to dry things out. Ok, that might be a bit too much to ask for, but hey, a girl can dream!

### Winter Squash

We have some beds with mixed winter squash growing. In these beds you will find Sugar Pie Pumpkins,



Spaghetti Squash, Georgia Candy Roasters and probably a few others. We don't grow loads of any one of these, so mixing the seeds and planting makes sense. We grew the Georgia Candy Roaster for the first time last year and I fell in love! It is a giant squash, and is long and banana shaped. It has a small seed pocket for its size, so you get a lot of meat. The flavor is

excellent and silky. Sugar Pie Pumpkins are perfect for pie or those special soups you serve inside the pumpkin. Another great option for "pumpkin" pie is the Butternut. This year for Thanksgiving we are making 3 "pumpkin" pies, one from each of these squashes. Doing a real side by side comparison.

# RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

Update on Sweet Potatoes; this past weekend the guys sorted through loads of sweet potatoes, there were still loads more stored in the greenhouse. Jose asked that we put them back into the box this week, so we are. They are so delicious and they are looking pretty good. I hope you enjoy them as much as I do. I find the sweetness goes so nicely with a bit of green. As an example, sautéed bok choy with some sesame and soy sauce. I love butter and soy sauce on a baked sweet potato so the two would work really well together.

## Shaved Radish, Fennel, and Parmesan Salad

*Recipe from Martha Stewart, Serves 4*

2 TB Extra-Virgin Olive Oil  
1 TB fresh Lemon Juice  
2 tsp Whole-Grain Mustard  
Coarse Salt and ground Black Pepper  
1 bulb Fennel, cored and thinly sliced, plus 1/4 cup fronds  
5 Radishes, thinly sliced  
3 TB freshly shaved Parmesan

Whisk together oil, lemon juice, and mustard and season with salt and pepper. Toss dressing with fennel bulb and radishes and adjust seasoning if necessary. Top with Parmesan and fennel fronds.

## Coconut-Poached Fish With Bok Choy

*Recipe by Colu Henry from NYT*

*Cooking, Serves 4, takes about 25 minutes*

The notes recommend serving this Thai inspired dish, over a bit of Jasmine rice.

4 (6-ounce) Cod fillets or other flaky White Fish

Kosher salt

2 TB good Vegetable Oil or Coconut Oil

1 large Shallot, thinly sliced

2 Garlic cloves, thinly sliced

1 (2-inch) piece Ginger, peeled

and cut into thin matchsticks

1 fresh Thai or Serrano chile, thinly sliced

2 (13 1/2-ounce) cans Coconut Milk

1 1/2 tsp Fish Sauce

1 tsp light Brown Sugar

About 7 ounces Bok Choy, ends trimmed and stalks separated

1/4 cup roughly chopped Cilantro, both leaves and tender stems

2 TB thinly sliced Scallion Greens

Lime wedges (from 1 lime), for serving

Flaky salt (optional)

Season fish well with salt. In a large sauté pan, heat oil over medium heat. Add shallot, garlic, ginger and chile, and cook, stirring often until they become translucent, about 2 minutes. Season with salt. Add coconut milk, fish sauce and brown sugar, and whisk together until combined and sugar dissolves. Bring mixture to a gentle simmer. Add cod fillets and turn the heat down to low. Cover and cook until cod is just cooked through and opaque, about 6 to 8 minutes. Carefully remove the fish and plate in bowls. Add bok choy to the coconut milk broth and turn heat to medium-low. Cook bok choy until leaves are wilted and stems are tender, about 1 to 2 minutes. Divide bok choy evenly alongside the fish and ladle the coconut milk broth over each portion. Top with cilantro, scallions and a good squeeze of lime, and serve with remaining wedges on the side. Garnish with flaky salt, if desired.

## Butternut Squash and Cider Soup

*Recipe by Molly O'Neill from NYT Cooking*

*Serves 4 and takes about 40 minutes*

This sounded really interesting and a little different.

1 Shallot, peeled and minced

1 clove Garlic, peeled and minced

1/4 cup Water

3 cups peeled, seeded and cubed Butternut squash

1/2 cup Chicken broth, homemade or low-sodium canned

3/4 cup Apple Cider

1/4 cup Sour Cream

1/2 tsp Salt, plus more to taste

1/2 unpeeled Red Rome or Delicious Apple, cored and finely diced

Cracked Black Pepper

Heat a medium-size saucepan over low heat. Add the shallot, garlic and water. Cook until the shallot and garlic are softened, being careful not to let them burn, about 2 minutes. Add the squash and the chicken broth and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer until the squash is soft, about 20 minutes. Carefully pour the mixture into a blender jar. Holding the top down with a towel, blend until smooth. Add the cider, light sour cream and salt. Continue

blending until well combined. Soup can be made ahead up to this point. Place in a clean saucepan over low heat until heated through. Season with additional salt if needed. Ladle the soup among 4 bowls. Garnish with the diced red apple and cracked black pepper. Serve immediately.

## Sweet Potato Aligot

*Recipe by Melissa Clark*

*This serves 6 and takes about 45 minutes.*

1 lb Sweet Potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch chunks

Kosher Salt

Grapeseed, Olive or Sunflower Oil

Leaves from 1 small bunch Sage

1 Thyme Sprig or use Eatwell Thyme Salt

1/4 cup Heavy Cream

6 TB Unsalted Butter, cubed

1 Garlic clove, finely grated or minced

Large pinch of freshly grated Nutmeg

8 oz grated Gruyère, Cheddar

or Emmentaler Cheese

5 oz Saint-Nectaire or Tomme de Savoie Cheese, rind removed, cubed

In a medium pot, cover the potatoes and a generous amount of salt with 1 inch of water. Bring to a boil, then simmer until potatoes are tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Drain but don't wash out the pot. (You'll need it again later.). Meanwhile, fry the sage leaves: Line a plate with a paper towel. In a small skillet, heat 1/4-inch of oil. Add sage leaves a few at a time, and fry until golden and crisp, usually about 1 minute or so. Use a slotted spoon to transfer fried leaves to the paper-towel-lined plate and sprinkle with salt. Repeat with remaining sage leaves, adding more oil to the pan if needed. In a small pot over medium heat, add the thyme and cream, and bring to a simmer. Turn off the heat and cover until needed. Transfer the cooked potatoes to a food processor, and pulse just until mashed. Or pass potatoes through a food mill or large-holed sieve to mash. Return potatoes to their cooking pot and set it over low heat. Using a wooden spoon, stir in butter, garlic and nutmeg until the butter melts.

Remove thyme sprig from the cream. Stir the cream into the potatoes, then stir in the cheese, a handful at a time, until melted and stringy. Serve immediately, topped with the fried sage leaves.

### This Week's Box List

Leeks

Onions

\*Lettuce

\*Bok Choy

\*Fennel

\*Radishes or Turnips

\*Butternut Squash

Parsley

\*Sweet Potatoes

Arugula

Cabbage, napa or green

\*Fuyu Persimmons from Vacaville

Persimmon

*\*indicates Box for 2*