



WEEK OF FEBRUARY 8TH, 2021 #6/52

### Changes In The Pack House

As seasons change, so does staffing (thank you Connor for that apt metaphor!) and we are in the process of training two new ladies for the pack house jobs. Connor, who started with us several months back, came to us at a time we really needed an extra set of hands. I met Connor when he was a young barista at the Barn and Pantry here in Dixon. Between COVID and the Pantry moving to a smaller location, they had to downsize a bit and Connor decided it was his time to move on to something new and so he landed here. I am very grateful for his eye for detail, cleanliness, and organization that really helped get us through the past several months. But as he wrote, in one of the sweetest notes I have ever received, his season here on the farm has come to an end. So at the moment, Joanna from Guru Ram Das is helping out while Jesus' wife works out day care, and we now have Mamma Lupe working with us. Mamma Lupe is Papa Ramon's wife, which makes her the very proud mother of Agustin, Ramon, Josezito, Louis, Jesus, and Victor. She actually has 11 children, but these are the guys who are part of our farm family, which is now growing even more. And once Jesus and his wife sort out day care, the pack house will be run by Mother and Daughter-In-Law. Lupe started with us last week and it was the sweetest thing to watch the boys helping her out and explaining things for her. There was one really precious moment while I was out there helping to wash beets, when they were helping her get her sweatshirt off because her hands were wet and muddy from beets. It's little snippets like these that are just so sweet.

I do want to say, with every change, we run into little hiccups and misunderstandings, so please be patient with us if mistakes are made; but do let us know, so we can address issues and fix them. There are a lot of balls in the air getting the boxes and extras out, so the opportunity for mistakes is rather high. For the most part I think the crew is truly amazing, all of them, from Elise in the office, to Ian handling extras, Jose and his crew in the field and now our new ladies in the pack house. They get the job done and I am always so impressed with the work they do, especially after spending a couple of hours lending a hand in the pack house washing turnips and beets!

### Strawberries

The storm two weeks ago didn't do much damage but we did have some issues with our second planting of strawberries. Like many things in life, the cause isn't really straightforward or clear, because to say the storm damaged the strawberries is really only sharing half the story. So to dig a bit deeper, here is the full



story. Strawberry starts are what they refer to as crowns. For years we have purchased our strawberry crowns from NorCal Nursery, but they are not organic. Organic strawberry starts haven't really been an option until just recently, and last year my CCOF inspector told me we had to at least try to work with organic starts. Not being one to change something 100% unless I have to, we ordered 50% of our strawberries as usual, from NorCal and 50% from ION - Innovative Organic Nursery. Andrew and I were pretty



excited to try them out, but here's the thing, ION's crowns aren't ready until late October, early November. We normally put our starts in the ground mid to late July. Doing so gives the plants plenty of time to establish root systems and beef up before the winter hits. Additionally, putting little baby plants in the ground early November when we know there is a great risk of frost is pretty dangerous. And of course, we got them planted, and then we had a pretty heavy frost, but most of them survived. Currently, the organic strawberry starts are still really small; remember things don't grow much in winter. To loop this story back around to the Big Storm O '21, when those 70 mph winds came blasting through the farm, the staples

that hold the weed cloth down weren't enough to withstand that velocity and the plants were too small to help any. The cloth flew and now we have no weed barrier under those strawberry plants. The plants we got from NorCall Nursery last summer had a chance to size up, spread out, and establish good roots, so they suffered no damage, and are looking fantastic. They were big enough to help hold the cloth in place. You might think not having weed barrier isn't

that big of a deal, but we keep our strawberries in the ground for two years, and not having weed protection creates a huge problem for us. Basically we will lose that planting for the second year, maybe even this year. Potentially we will only have half our normal amount of strawberries this year, which would be tragic! As much as I would love to have organic starts, the timing is really wrong for us, and perhaps timing isn't *really everything*, but it is a *big* something.



# RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

## Orange Almond Cake

Original Recipe by Claudia Roden

Here is a repeat of a recipe, notes and all, that I have been posting the last couple of years:  
*If you have not made this cake, stop what you are doing and make it now! It is truly one of the best, easiest, delicious, moist and satisfying cakes ever. AND IT IS GLUTEN AND DAIRY FREE. However I do enjoy it with a dollop of yogurt or whipped cream. The secret to this cake is, it is made with simmered whole oranges, yep peel and all. So you will want to give yourself some time, wash your oranges well then put into a pot of boiling water. Turn the heat down and simmer for about 90 minutes. Drain and cool enough to handle. Then I cut them in half to remove the seeds. Put all of it into the food processor and process until fairly smooth. You will need 1 cup, if you have extra you can freeze it for another cake later. You can do half orange/half lemon which is also delicious. I reduced the sugar from the original recipe and think this is plenty sweet.*

6 eggs  
3/4 cup Sugar  
1 1/2 cup Almond Flour  
1 tsp Baking Powder  
1 tsp Salt  
1 cup Orange Puree

Put eggs into a mixer with whip attachment and beat on low until they break down. Then add the sugar and whip until nice and fluffy/foamy. I usually let it go for a good while, 5 minutes or so. Turn the mixer off, then add the almond flour, baking powder and salt, which I typically pre-mix to make sure there aren't any lumps of baking powder. Mix well, then add orange puree. I bake mine in a springform with parchment paper wrapped around the bottom insert piece. Bake at 375 for 30 minutes, turn half way around and bake for another 30 minutes or so. Test with toothpick. It can get pretty dark, which is why I bake it at 375 instead of 400 like the recipe says.

## Turnip Fritters

Recipe found on [brooklynsupper.com](http://brooklynsupper.com)

I love fritters, latkes, etc. And turnip fritters are particularly yummy. This recipe cooks up the greens to serve on the side. You won't have a pound of greens, so I would suggest using some bok choy, mizuna or spinach. Finally, I would add a bit of freshly chopped parsley to the fritters.

1 1/2 pounds turnips, scrubbed and shredded  
2 teaspoons sea salt, divided  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
1 cup fine ground cornmeal  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
2 large eggs  
Neutral oil like canola for frying  
1 pound turnip greens  
4 thick-cut strips bacon  
1 medium yellow onion, minced

1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes  
1-2 cup Chicken Broth  
Pimentón aioli for serving

Fill a sink with cold water. Immerse the turnip greens, shake under the water a bit, and then let the dirt settle in the water. Roll greens in a towel and set aside to dry. When greens are dry, chop them up. To make the greens, set a large skillet over medium heat. Add the bacon and cook until both sides have crisp edges and the fat has rendered. Set bacon aside to cool. In the same skillet, still over medium heat, add the onion and red pepper flakes. Saute until onions are translucent, 5 - 7 minutes. Fold in the turnip greens, a handful or two at a time. Sprinkle with just a pinch of sea salt as you go. When bacon is cool, crumble it in. Add 1 cup broth, bring to a simmer, and turn heat to medium-low. Cook, stirring often, until greens are very tender, at least 30 - 40 minutes. Towards the end of cook time, add sea salt to taste, keeping in mind that the salt will concentrate as the greens reduce. As greens cook, add up to 1/2 - 1 cup more broth as needed. Meanwhile, make the fritters. In a large mixing bowl, toss shredded turnips with 1

teaspoon sea salt and set aside for 15 minutes. (The turnips won't release much water, but this does help soften them.) After 15 minutes, toss the turnips with the flours, 1 teaspoon sea salt, and black pepper. Fold eggs into the mixture until everything is well combined. Set mixture aside while you heat the oil. Set a wire rack on a baking sheet and slide into the oven. Set temperature to 200 degrees F. Set a large cast iron or other heavy skillet on the stove and turn the dial just past medium heat (roughly 5-o'clock). Add oil to a 1/4-inch depth. When oil shimmers and is fragrant, gather fritter dough into small discs (with about 3 tablespoons dough). Don't pack them too tightly. Carefully immerse 4 - 5 fritters in the oil at a time. Cook fritters for 2 - 3 minutes on each side. Place cooked fritters on the wire rack in the oven. Repeat for remaining fritters. As you cook, you may want to edge the heat down slightly. Just before serving, whip up the aioli (if you're new to the process, allow a bit more time). [Find the pimenton aioli recipe here.](#) Serve fritters topped with greens and with a big dollop of aioli on the side.

Romanesco is a delicious treat. I love to break it apart, toss in good olive oil with a decent sprinkling of Eatwell Smoked Chili Salt. Toss it out onto a baking sheet and roast it in a hot oven until it just starts to turn a little crispy on the edge. So good to snack on or eat as a side dish. You can also toss it into a pasta dish, or use it as a topping on baked potatoes. It pairs really nicely with fish. Naturally you could go a bit more fancy and try this recipe for [Roasted Carrot And Romanesco Salad with Beet Hummus](#) from The Organic Kitchen's website. No matter how you use it, I hope you enjoy it!

### This Week's Box List

Spinach  
\*Turnips or Radishes  
\*Bok choy  
Mizuna  
\*Parsley  
\*Navel Oranges  
Lettuce  
Green Onions or Leeks  
\*Winter Squash  
\*Romanesco  
Dino kale  
\*Carrots from Terra Firma

*\*Indicates Box for 2*