



WEEK OF MARCH 1ST, 2021 #9/52

### So What Do You Do With A 97 Year Old In A Pandemic?

In August my mother had a mild stroke. The hospital would not release her to go home unless there was someone there to help take care of her. She was adamant that she did not want someone moving in with her, so the only solution left to us was to have her move in with me. Living on the farm is a very different life for her. After living in a retirement community in Santa Rosa for over 30 years, where she still has many friends, the farm is very isolated. Yes, we are here working out of the house, but we are working, and busy. So that means she is sitting around with little to do and is really bored and lonely. At age 97



she is still really quite fit and always looking for things to do. Most of the tasks I could have her do require some assistance and that is tricky fitting in to a busy day. Ultimately, when COVID is less of a threat I would love to hire someone to come in a few days a week to do things with her and keep her company. But for the time being I have her filling lavender sachet bags and stripping stems of lavender of their precious buds. She takes her work seriously and has been quite annoyed with me for the last several days because she filled all the bags and I haven't brought her any new work. She really wants to help somehow *and* she wants something to ease the boredom of life on the farm. When I finish writing the newsletter I will make a trip to the warehouse to pick up another box of lavender for her to work on.

### Heavy Pruning

The pruners finished up their job yesterday. The last trees they worked on were the apricots. Our apricot trees are gorgeous giants, but at that size they will never be good fruit producers. Too much energy goes into growth and not enough goes into growing fruit. It has been years since we got even close to a decent amount of fruit from them, so we decided to go for the buzzcut, and prune them heavily now. Sacrificing apricots this year should give us a lot more fruit next year, and they should be sweeter and tastier. Fruit at the top of tall trees is a waste anyway because that is too high up for the guys to pick. Cutting the trees to a much shorter height will give us fruit at a much more manageable level and that helps me achieve one of my



primary goals of making things easier for the crew. We did decide to leave the cherry trees for this year, and work on a heavier pruning earlier in the season next winter.

### Starting The Farmhouse Nursery

The greenhouse is nearly 100%. At this point we need to get the tables arranged and then get the plastic put up. Then we just need to wait for starts to be ready to go out there. Our first in-house, literally, seed trays have been sown and now we are just waiting for those tiny givers of life to sprout. Last Friday, Elise and I sowed two types of peppers, Baron Poblano and Red Ember Cayennes. 72 cell starter trays fit pretty perfectly into our harvest crates, which we have an abundance of. Because they don't need direct sunlight to germinate, but rather a steady temperature, the thought was to germinate in the farmhouse. My soil-covered house keeps a fairly consistent temp. I pull the trays just out front to gently mist them once a day and let them warm up a bit more in the sunshine. Then every evening I pull them back into the house. What we are hoping to achieve with this project is the ability to grow some varieties that we don't rely on as staples for the CSA boxes, but to be able to add a bit of



occasional variety. So I don't need 2 or 5 thousand of these peppers. If we get 500 plants I will be quite happy. That is simply not an option for us with Headstart. But wouldn't it be great to have Poblanos or Cayennes available to order as extras this summer? And maybe even be able to put a few in the boxes a couple of times? Next on the list are tomatoes and eggplants!

# RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

## Riffing On A Classic Not "Florentine" Sole

Last week I wrote about the Turnip Cream I made as a topping sauce for some savory crepes. This past weekend I had a taste for Sole Florentine, but looking at the misc remnants of boxes in the fridge I definitely did not have enough spinach. I did have 3 heads of romanesco and a couple of bunches of leeks. So I thought I would riff a bit off the crepes and come up with a dish that satisfied the general craving for Sole Florentine, while taking advantage of what I had on hand. And since I am working on dealing with the "post Holiday" heavies, and always looking for opportunities to sneak more veg into any and every dish, I switched out the béchamel for the turnip cream. This time I used more of the turnip cooking water to thin the sauce and only added a bit of cream and parmesan. Instead of spinach on the bottom I did a layer of cooked romanesco with sautéed leeks.

Here is basically what I did:

2 lbs of Sole, we had Dover

2 or 3 heads of Romanesco, broken into florets washed well and simmered until tender

2 bunches of Leeks, but Spring Onions would be excellent, chopped and simmered in butter until tender

**For the veg base**, mix the Romanesco and leeks, add a bit of salt and white pepper to taste. Since we have fennel in the box this week, you could chop that up and add it to the sautéing leeks. I also included just a little sprinkling of fresh rosemary into the veg mix.

**Turnips**, use 1 or 2 of the purple tops big guys or an entire bunch of Tokyo (At the moment I'm not sure which is going into the box), peel and cut into small chunks and simmer on medium heat until really soft. Drain the water, but save it. Add a knob of butter, probably 1 to 2 TB and a splash of cream, then puree with immersion blender, adding some of the cooking water to thin out. Season with salt and white pepper to taste.

**To put the dish together**, use a large lasagna dish. For the bottom layer use the romanesco and leeks, then top with the fish, over the fish pour your turnip cream. Top with a heavy sprinkling of Parmesan cheese and bake at 350/375 for about 30 minutes. The top should be a bit crispy and definitely a dark golden. We enjoyed this dish with slices of roasted butternut squash, but it would be delicious served with a blend of rice, including some wild rice or Rancho Gordo Black Quinoa.

## Morning Glory Muffins

*Recipe by Samantha Seneviratne From NYT Cooking*

I thought since we have carrots in the box this week, and your can easily get raisins and walnuts and flour delivered with your CSA share, why not throw this recipe in this week? I would add some zest from this week's mandarins for a burst of sunshine:) Plus who doesn't love a freshly baked delicious Morning Muffin?

1 cup All-purpose Flour  
¾ cup Whole-Wheat Flour  
1 ½ tsp ground Cinnamon  
1 tsp Baking Powder  
½ tsp Baking Soda  
½ tsp Salt  
¾ cup Whole Milk  
¾ cup packed Dark Brown Sugar  
2 large Eggs  
¾ cup shredded Carrots (from 2 medium carrots)  
½ cup shredded Apple (from 1 medium apple)  
½ cup unsweetened shredded Coconut, toasted  
¾ cup finely chopped Walnuts, toasted  
¾ cup Raisins  
½ cup melted Coconut Oil

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 12-cup standard muffin tin with paper liners. In a medium bowl, whisk together all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda and salt. In a large bowl, whisk together milk, dark brown sugar and eggs until smooth. Stir carrot, apple, coconut, 1/2 cup of the walnuts and 1/2 cup of the raisins into the wet mixture. Stir in the melted coconut oil. With a large rubber spatula, fold the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients until just combined. Do not over mix. Divide the batter evenly among the prepared cups. Sprinkle the remaining walnuts and raisins evenly over the tops of the muffins. Bake until puffed and set and a toothpick inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean, about 20 minutes. Transfer the muffins, in the tin, to a rack to cool

for 5 minutes. Then remove the muffins from the tin and let cool completely on the rack. Once cool, store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days.

## Tofu with Thai Peanut Sauce (PRA RAM)

*Recipe from LePetitEats*

This is one of my favorite Thai dishes. Since we do not have enough spinach in the box for a full lb, consider adding any other greens you have on hand to get the right proportion. Beet or turnip tops would work great, and a great way to use them, you could even add a good handful of parsley.

2 TB Coconut oil  
1 tsp freshly grated Ginger  
1 tsp Thai or Fresno chile seeded and minced (optional)  
1 garlic Clove mince

Zest and juice of 1 Lime  
2 tsp Red Curry paste  
1 cup Vegetable broth  
1/2 cup smooth Peanut Butter  
1/2 cup Coconut Milk  
2 TB Brown Sugar  
2 TB Soy Sauce  
14 ounces firm Tofu  
2 TB Coconut oil  
Salt to taste  
1 lb Spinach leaves rinsed

Add 2 tablespoons coconut oil to a saucepan over medium heat. Add ginger, chile (if using), garlic, lime zest, and red curry paste and cook for 1-2 minutes. Add vegetable broth, peanut butter, coconut milk, brown sugar, and soy sauce and whisk until smooth. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Continue to cook for another 5 minutes or so, stirring frequently, until sauce has thickened slightly. Remove from heat and stir in lime juice. Remove tofu from package and place over a few paper towels. Press on the tofu gently so that the paper towels soak up any excess liquid, replacing the paper towels as necessary until tofu feels mostly dry. Cut tofu into large cubes. Add 2 tablespoons coconut oil to a skillet and heat over medium-high heat. When the oil is shimmering, add tofu and pan fry until golden on all sides. This is much easier if using a non-stick or cast iron skillet. If using stainless steel wait until the tofu releases from the pan before browning the next side. Remove from heat, sprinkle with salt and set aside. Fill a medium saucepan with 2 inches of water, and fit with a steamer insert. Bring to a boil. Add spinach. Reduce to a simmer. Cover, and steam until spinach has wilted, about 2 minutes. Bring the peanut sauce back to a simmer. Transfer spinach and tofu to a plate and top generously with peanut sauce.

## This Week's Box List

Onions  
Leeks  
\*Chard  
Red Russian Kale  
\*Parsley  
\*Spinach  
\*Turnips or Beets  
\*Fennel  
Romanesco  
Rosemary or Chives  
\*Carrots from Terra Firma  
\*Tango Mandarins from Gold Oak Partnership

*\*Indicates Box for 2*