



FOOD FOR THE BODY & SOUL
WEEK OF MAY 17TH, 2021 #20/52



Welcome to my experimental life...

There is so much for me to learn about farming, but since I have a farm to *actually* run, I don't have time to stop what I do every day to stick my nose in books, watch training videos or listen to countless farming podcasts. I do some of all of that, but in little spurts. Fortunately we have a great crew, and I did learn quite a bit during my years with Nigel. Now I find I have finally gotten to the place where I know enough to know what I don't know. I can tell you it is a very scary thing to feel you know so little you have no idea what you *don't* know. How do you ask for help or advice if you don't even know a thing is a thing? Lucky for me I've come a long way these past 4 years (oooof, that makes my heart drop), and I am fortunate to have some great farmers to turn to for advice.

Advice aside, sometimes I do things just because I want to see what happens. Sometimes jumping into a crazy idea is the way I learn best. One example of this is the strawberry field we just planted. I don't know if we have ever planted strawberries in April, but I decided to try it this year. And wouldn't you know we were hit with a heat wave the days around planting. On top of that, the pump needed a tiny little part and because of that one little part the pump wasn't working, so we couldn't irrigate the way we should have. The plants looked pretty pathetic. I have been quite nervous to go check on them, but the other day Elise and I were out there and to my joyous surprise they are perky with lots of new growth, some flowers and even a few baby strawberries growing! Oh my goodness, what a relief, I didn't completely fail! I know Jose thought I was nuts when I told him we were planting strawberries now. His skepticism was obvious, but he humors me.



To explain why I decided to take this \$6000 risk, first we lost the organic strawberries we planted last November. This means the amount of strawberries producing for this season is

really only about half. When we plant in July/August we usually get berries off that new planting sometime in October, so I am hoping we might get strawberries from these guys in the next couple of months. The other reason I wanted to try this out, sadly, is the reality that we will most likely be knee deep in fire season during our normal strawberry planting season. We had days up here last summer when the air quality was well over 400. Unfortunately a farm can't just stop working if we want to keep the farm, but are there things I can do to reduce work load that time of year, perhaps. A lot goes into strawberry planting, the soil is prepped, drip tape is laid, mulch fabric is put out and stapled and then the strawberry crowns are planted by hand, all 15,600 of them! This project requires all hands on deck, so the guys always do it **AFTER** they have worked their very long day. If we have a really bad fire season again this year, I want the guys out of the fields as quickly as possible and this is one less project for them to do at that time of year.

Now I am toying with the idea of doing some summer squash starts a little later in the season to have zucchini run a bit longer. The past couple of years the weather has

been so hot right up to Thanksgiving I am thinking maybe a fresh planting of courgettes might be kind of nice. And I can do those starts here on the farm rather than paying Headstart for them. In case it fails we aren't out much



money. The sad truth is, between the longer hot summer and the smoke filled skies we lost loads of crops last fall/winter, like almost all of our cabbages. It was so sad to go through the entire winter without cabbages. I am happy to say the Wakefield cabbages we planted a couple of

months back are shaping up pretty nicely, but the Napa Cabbage has not formed heads at all. I read up on this and it is because it has been too warm. The plants are beautiful and sizable, so this week you are participating in one of my experiments, we are harvesting the headless Napas and sending them in the family box. I did read up on this and apparently it is not unheard of to use the outer leaves of a Napa cabbage or to harvest if no head forms. The leaves are quite prickly, but that goes away once you blanch them. I think cooked and chopped the Napa cabbage leaves would be a great addition to a dumpling. Here is a [recipe](#) from Alton Brown for a Vegetarian Napa Cabbage dumpling. As I mentioned above I would at the very least blanch the leaves rather than using shredded raw.

And finally, I was out this morning with some members who came up to pick strawberries, and the guys were just finishing up a planting, Sugar Baby Watermelons! The plants already have a few flowers



on them, I am hoping they are excited to jump right into production. These are what they refer to as "ice box" watermelons, a smaller melon meant to fit in your ice box. They have a darker and thicker rind, so less likely to split, and inside the flesh is also darker. These mature more quickly because they are smaller. I really hope the squirrels don't take them out and we get some nice fruit later this summer.

RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

This is quite the box we have this week. The collards were so big Jose had to double check they really were actual collards. We grew a new variety this time around "Top Bunch" which is slightly savoyed, meaning the leaves are a bit crinkled. Consider using them blanched as a wrap filled with marinated sautéed tofu and other veggies. I learned that trick from Liz, our former CSA manager, who makes the most delicious wraps with Collards! One of my kitchen hacks for greens is keeping them bunched with the rubber band left on, give them a good washing under the running faucet or plunge in a bowl of water. Bring a tall pot of water to boil, then hold the stem end of the bunch and swirl it round and round in the boiling/simmering water. Pull it out and drain in a colander, shake it out and then put it into a plastic bag and into the fridge until you are ready to use. It will cook up super fast and I do this with all the greens in one go. I find they stay good for a few days. One last box item mention, Apricots. Ours are not typically the sweetest, but that means they are fantastic for jamming. Because jam requires so much sugar I prefer using less sweet fruit. If you are up for making a little bit of jam, I LOVE this [recipe](#) from David Lebovitz, it is the best I have ever had!

Brown Butter Sugar Snap Peas & New Potatoes

Recipe found on pillsbury.com

1 lb New Potatoes, cut into 1/4" thick slices

1 1/2 cups Sugar Snap Peas

3 TB Butter

3 TB Water

2 TB Lemon Juice

1/4 tsp Chicken Bouillon granules

1 tsp chopped Chives

In 4-quart saucepan, heat 1 cup water to boiling. Add potatoes. Cover; cook over medium heat 10 to 12 minutes or until almost tender. Add sugar snap peas to potatoes.

Cover; cook 5 to 8 minutes or until peas are hot and potatoes are tender. Drain; return to saucepan. Meanwhile, in 1-quart saucepan, cook butter over medium heat, stirring frequently, until it begins to brown. Stir in 3 tablespoons water, the lemon juice and bouillon; cook about 2 minutes, stirring occasionally, until hot. Stir in chives. Pour browned butter mixture over cooked vegetables; stir gently to coat. If desired, season to taste with salt.

Collard Green Gratin

Bon Appetit October 2013

Ok I know I include this recipe a couple of times a year, but it is one of my favorite recipes and one never knows how long we will have collards, so I recommend making this now!

4 oz. very thinly sliced Country Ham or Prosciutto

1 cup coarse fresh Breadcrumbs

4 TB Olive Oil, divided

1 tsp chopped fresh Thyme

1 cup finely grated Parmesan, divided

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 bunches Collard greens (about 1 lb.), center ribs and stems removed

1 large Onion, thinly sliced

2 Garlic cloves, finely chopped

2 TB Unsalted Butter

2 TB All-purpose Flour

2 cups Whole Milk

1/4 tsp freshly grated Nutmeg

Preheat oven to 325°. Place ham on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake until crisp, 20–25 minutes; let cool and break into pieces. Combine breadcrumbs and 2 Tbsp. oil in a medium skillet; toast over medium heat, tossing occasionally, until golden brown and crisp, 10–15 minutes. Remove from heat and add thyme and 1/4 cup Parmesan; season with salt and pepper. Mix in ham and set aside.

Cook collard greens in a large pot of boiling salted water until tender and bright green, about 4 minutes. Drain, transfer to a bowl of ice water, and let cool. Drain and squeeze dry with paper towels. Coarsely chop greens and place in a large bowl. Heat remaining 2 Tbsp. oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and cook, stirring often, until softened and golden, 15–20 minutes. Transfer to bowl with greens; set aside. Reserve saucepan. Increase oven temperature to 400°. Melt butter in reserved saucepan over medium heat. Add flour and cook, whisking constantly, until mixture is smooth and very pale brown, about 4 minutes. Gradually whisk in milk, 1/2-cupful at a time; add nutmeg. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer, whisking often, until thickened, 5–8 minutes. Whisk in remaining 3/4 cup Parmesan. Add béchamel to collard green mixture and mix to combine; season with salt and pepper. Transfer collard green mixture to a 10" cast-iron skillet or 9" pie dish and top with breadcrumb mixture; place pie dish on a rimmed

baking sheet. Bake until gratin is bubbling, 15–20 minutes. Let cool slightly before serving. DO AHEAD: Ham and breadcrumb mixture can be made 1 day ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.

Kale & Sugar Snap Pea Salad

Recipe by Mark Bittman from NYT Cooking

3/4 cup good Vegetable Oil

1/2 cup peeled, chopped Ginger

1/4 cup Miso paste

1/2 cup Rice Vinegar, or as needed

Finely grated zest and juice of 2 Lemons or Limes

1/4 cup Sugar, or as needed

Coarse salt and black pepper

FOR THE SALAD

2 TB Sugar

6 to 8 dried Apricots

1 medium bunch Kale, coarse stems removed and discarded, roughly chopped

2 cups Sugar Snap Peas, stemmed

4 oz Feta Cheese, crumbled

1/4 cup Almonds, toasted and coarsely chopped

2 TB chopped fresh Mint leaves, or as needed

Make the dressing: In a blender or food processor, combine the oil, ginger, miso, 1/2 cup vinegar, lemon or lime zest and juice, and sugar. Process for about 30 seconds to form a creamy emulsion. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and add vinegar if needed. Make the salad: In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, combine the sugar with 1/4 cup water. Add the dried apricots and poach just until rehydrated, 2 to 3 minutes, then remove from heat. In a serving bowl, combine the kale, snap peas and feta. Add salad dressing to taste, and toss well. Sprinkle with almonds and garnish with poached apricots. Sprinkle with mint and serve.

This Week's Box List

Chard

*Green Garlic

*Potatoes

*Lettuce

*Red Kale

*Collards

*Snap peas

Turnips or Radishes

Bok Choy

*Apricots

Broccoli

Cabbage Leaves

** indicates Box for 2*