



WEEK OF DECEMBER 7TH, 2021 #50/52

Belle & Nomi

Our sweet Belle went in yesterday to get spayed. I don't see much of her because her job is out with the chickens. Agustin brought her up early yesterday morning then I brought her to our vet in town.

First thing we do is get her weight. She is a good 20 lbs smaller than her brother Beau. And they look nothing alike. She has silky shorter fur, and the sweetest eyes. Under normal circumstances she too is really energetic, but in ways much more mellow than her brother. Unfortunately, she hasn't adjusted too well to her role as chicken dog, but I am hoping to make some time to work with her on that. Certainly, as she needs to spend the next 10 days in the house (and that means keeping the two puppies separated!) I will work on more training with her. It is hard spending a lot of time with Belle, because it is a challenge keeping myself from falling totally in love with her and wanting to keep her in the house with us. But she has an important job to do.

I have to give a shout out to all vets, vet techs and support staff. Having a good clinic to bring your animals to is very comforting. And those folks do such a good job of comforting their patient's care givers (us) and have the heartbreaking job of breaking bad news and ending lives. My vets are at Aggie Vet Clinic in Dixon and they have seen a lot of me in recent weeks. I have made several appointments getting the pups their shots. And then of course, there was my sweet Little Thing who came down with some mysterious condition that took him from me several weeks back. A week or so ago my old cat Nomi, showed up with an abscess on her hind leg. By the next morning it had more than doubled. She has lived with Feline HIV

for many years, and honestly, there have been many times I thought, this is it, but she always seemed to snap back. When I saw her that morning I knew the time had come and I made the call immediately. She was a pain in the... kind of cat, demanding and not particularly affectionate, but she was the last animal Nigel and I brought into our life together, and losing her is like losing another little piece of him, once again. But that is life, a series of comings and goings, the new comes in and the old eventually leaves us. It has been a year of a lot of that, but transition always makes space for fresh growth, and that is pretty exciting. For now, I am a cat-free household, kind of strange after so many years.



Peas

Last Saturday, while I was at the market, Jose sent me a video of the guys on our old seeder, putting Sugar Snap Peas in the ground. We had already planted sugar snaps and favas, but I wanted to grow more this year. Since we have had such lovely weather I thought why not give it a try, even though it is a little late in the year. We haven't yet had a hard frost, just some days with morning sparkles. Of course day length also plays a role in the growth process, but the days will be growing longer soon. We spend so much money, literally tens of thousands of dollars on plant starts, why not try a little more direct seeding? So we have planted a lot over the past week or so, including another 50 lbs of peas.

I love it when Jose sends me photos and videos of the guys working. Because we have such a language barrier, it shows me that our relationship is growing in spite of that hurdle. I use google translate a lot when texting my guys, and find I am learning a lot that way.

RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

Mandarin or Tangelos?

Another lesson learned. A couple of weeks back I saw that the guys had picked a bunch of citrus. They had the knob on top so I assumed they were our tangelos. But Jose kept calling them mandarins. I am used to mandarins being small and very flat, almost depressed on top. When I talked to Jose about it he said absolutely they were mandarins, so I looked it up. And of course, I was wrong, he was right, Satsumas do have a knobby top as well. There is always so much for us to learn around here, it means my life is far from boring! Honestly, I am always excited to learn something new, even if it means I have to admit I was wrong about something.

Mizuna

We have had a lot of gorgeous Mizuna at the market the past couple of weeks, but a lot of people don't know what it is or how to use it. Mizuna is a brassica from East Asia. It is often referred to as Japanese Mustard. It can be eaten raw, in salads, used to make a pesto, or in stir fry. It is a bit peppery, but not too strong.

Simple Mizuna Salad

Recipe from

dishinupthedirt.com

Makes 2 to 4 servings

I would spruce up this basic salad by adding thinly sliced/shaved fennel, chunks of apple or mandarin, and maybe even thinly sliced turnips. And I would definitely add some freshly chopped parsley and dill.

1 bunch Mizuna

2-3 Radishes, very thinly sliced

2-3 TB Extra Virgin Olive Oil

1 TB fresh Lemon Juice + additional to taste

Flakey Sea Salt

2 Tb Sunflower Seeds, lightly toasted on the stovetop for a few minutes

A few thin slices of fresh Parmesan cheese (optional)

A few pinches of micro greens (optional)

In a large bowl toss the mizuna with the radishes and drizzle in the olive oil and lemon juice. Toss well. Sprinkle the salad with a few healthy pinches of flakey sea salt, the toasted sunflower seeds, shaved parmesan (if using) and micro-greens (if using). Serve immediately.

Pasta with Pine Nuts, Broccoli, Sardines & Fennel

Recipe by John Torode found on BBC GoodFood

I am writing this while pretty hungry, and am wishing I could get up and make this right now! As this is a BBC recipe the ingredients are in metric so we need to do a little converting, if you don't cook in metric. 500 gm is a smidge over a lb at 17.6oz, so basically a lb of pasta. Sardines will come in the size tin they come in and 25 gm is a smidge under an oz, .88 oz, so again, an ounce will probably be just fine. Also it calls for purple sprouting broccoli, so cut your florets to bite sized pieces.

4 TB Extra-Virgin Olive Oil , plus a splash

500g Bucatini or long pasta, like Spaghetti

500g Broccoli

2 Red Onions, sliced

4 Garlic cloves , thinly sliced

1 small Fennel bulb, very thinly sliced

50g salted Sardine , or good-quality canned Sardines in oil

25g Pine Nut

25g Raisin

Juice and Zest ½ Lemon

Chili Flakes

Bring a large pan of water to the boil, with a splash of oil, then add the pasta. Cook following pack instructions, adding the broccoli for the final 5 mins. Meanwhile, gently heat the oil in a large pan. Add the onions and sliced garlic, and cook slowly for 2 mins. Add the fennel and cook for a couple more mins, until softened. Flake the sardines into the pan and stir around for a few more mins to break them up. Tip the pasta and broccoli into the pan with the pine nuts, raisins and lemon

juice. Toss together to let the pasta absorb the oil, season well and serve immediately, scattered with lemon zest and chili flakes.

Dill Sour Cream Dip

Recipe from The Salty Marshmallow

It is party season, and with such fragrant dill in the box why not make your own dip? The recipe calls for dried dill and parsley, so we are amending that a bit, which means you will have to add, taste and adjust to your liking.

1 cup Sour Cream

1 cup Mayonnaise

1 to 2 Tb Dill

2 Tb Dried Minced Onion

1 to 2 Tb Parsley

1 Tsp Garlic Powder

¼ Tsp Salt

Mix all ingredients together in a medium bowl. Cover and chill for at least 30 minutes before serving. Serve with fresh vegetables, chips, crackers, and bread.

This Week's Box List

*Broccoli

*Fennel

* Leeks

*Dill

*Satsuma Mandarins

*Lettuce

*Mizuna

Apples from Devoto OR

Vacaville Persimmons

Arugula

Red Russian Kale

Chard

Turnips

Parsley

* = Items in Box for 2