



WEEK OF JANUARY 2ND 2017 #1/52



February Spinach

While walking the farm, I like to see great crops to harvest for your weekly share. What really makes me happy, is seeing crops growing nicely for harvest later. My job is to make sure enough is planted and growing well for next season. This is spinach which was



planted in mid November. I can see that Ramon has managed to cultivate with the brush hoe at least once to keep down the weeds. There are twelve rows on each bed. The tractor wheels stay in the same position to minimize soil compaction.



Daisy the Alpha Chicken

Last week the crew came into work while it was dry enough to move the chicken houses and fencing. Already you can see that they have mown down all the grass around them. This is partly what makes the yolks orange. Keeping the houses moving onto fresh pasture spreads out their manure and makes sure that every part of the field has the bug clearing benefit of the girls, too. They will be moved to the end of the field, then come back, right in front of where we took this photo.

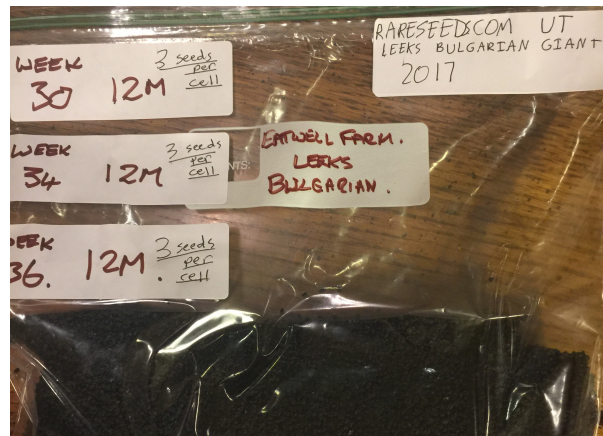
This pasture was sown in May last year in not ideal conditions. It was too hot. We planted twenty acres of pasture in November, which are all germinating nicely.

Daisy is from a line of dogs bred specifically as livestock guardian dogs. She was trained by us specifically to protect the chickens. We get coyotes on the farm almost every night and the occasional stray dog. We firmly believe that as we use these farm animals to produce eggs and meat for us we have to protect them as best we can with the fence and Daisy.



Bulgarian Leeks

We are always experimenting with new varieties. This leek was grown here last year. We like the nice long white stem. The varieties we grow have flavor, but so many people discard the green parts. We have been looking for one that has a longer white stem. Some of you have the long stemmed Bulgarian leeks in your harvest share today. The seed was bought from rareseeds.com who have the seed bank store in Petaluma. This year, we decided to grow only this variety.



One way we keep our seed planting record is in photo form. This bag is going to Headstart nursery in Gilroy. I am requesting 12,000 plants on weeks 30, 34

and 36. We ask them to sow three seeds in each cell of which two or three will germinate. This is called a multi sown cell and in our fertile soil this means we can almost double the amount of leeks for the same cost of plants.

If you have any questions about how we grow and crop let me know.



Celeriac

Oh the ugly root - Celeriac, but how delicious! I have found I really enjoy roasting chunks of celeriac with butternut and leeks with a little rosemary salt and olive oil. I like to have a container of this mix in the fridge

to add to soup, or beans, or as a little bit of a side dish, or recently I have been making pilaf and enjoying it with steamed greens and the butternut/celeriac/leek blend. Very yummy! I find the celeriac out in the field is really quite the site, the ugly root bulbs popping up out of the ground with the skinny celery like tops, so vibrantly green. We always take the tops off, but I personally would prefer to keep them on, that way you have two products in one. What do you think?

WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS!
ORGANIC@EATWELL.COM TEXT/VOICE 707-999-1150

Paul Bertolli's Cauliflower Soup

This soup might seem plain with only three ingredients, but Paul Bertolli knows exactly how to make a vegetable become the best it can be. This recipe is from his book *Cooking by Hand*, and makes for a soup that's delicate, sweet, and a pure expression of cauliflower.

Note: This formula works with cauliflower or romanesco. The natural pectin in these two vegetables makes for a smooth, thick, puree. It won't work with broccoli, squash, etc.

3 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium onion, sliced thin
1 head very fresh cauliflower (about 1-1/2 pounds), broken into florets
Salt, to taste
5 1/2 cups water, divided
Extra virgin olive oil, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Warm the olive oil in a heavy-bottomed pan. Sweat the onion in the olive oil over low heat without letting it brown for 15 minutes. Add the cauliflower, salt to taste, and 1/2 cup water. Raise the heat slightly, cover the pot tightly and steam the cauliflower for 10-15 minutes. Then add another 4 1/2 cups hot water, bring to a low simmer and cook an additional 30 minutes uncovered.

Working in batches, purée the soup in a blender to a very smooth, creamy consistency. Let the soup stand for 20 minutes. In this time it will thicken slightly.

If desired, thin the puree with 1/2 cup hot water. Reheat the soup. Serve hot, drizzled with a thin stream of extra-virgin olive oil and freshly ground black pepper.

Refrigerator Pickles

by Amie

Nothing brightens a dish more effectively than a little pickled element. I love adding them to salads, in sandwiches, or serving alongside cheese. This pickle formula can be adapted in any way you like. Want it a little spicy? Add some chili flake. Maybe a few coriander seeds. Mustard seeds, garlic cloves, and dill all work great. You can use any sturdy vegetable you like too! From this week's box you could do the daikon, romanesco, cauliflower, or apples (trust me). Next week it could be grapes, carrots, or turnips. Change up the vinegar, and you can go in even more directions (rice wine for a pan-asian flavor, cider vinegar if you would like a more middle eastern flavor, or stay with the white vinegar for a more eastern european taste). The point is to have fun, and create something that is unique to the season.

2 firm seedless cucumbers (or radishes, turnips, grapes, apples, etc.)
3 teaspoons kosher salt
1 tablespoon sugar/honey/brown sugar/molasses
1 tsp chili flake (if desired)
1 tsp coriander seeds (if desired)
1 tsp cumin seeds (if desired)
2 tbs chopped fresh dill
1 - 2 cups white vinegar (or rice wine, or cider vinegar)

Peel and prepare your vegetable of choice (the thinner the better).

Pile them into jars, firmly packed.

Mix salt, spices, and herbs together and divide evenly between jars.

Pour vinegar until vegetables are covered. Place lid on top and give it a shake.

Place jar in the refrigerator near the front, which should remind you to shake it once or twice more over the new few hours. (Or whenever you're back at the fridge.)

You can eat them as little as 1 to 2 hours later, but they become ideal at 6 to 8 hours. They'll keep in the fridge, submerged in their brine, for 3 weeks, though they never last that long around here...

A Note From Amie

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a lovely evening ringing out the old and bringing in the new calendar! I always spend New Year's Eve cleaning my house, updating my pantry, and rebuilding my stores after the dinners and gifting of the prior months. It's a happy project (one that you can do anytime, not just on New Year's Eve), and I love the way my house looks and smells afterwards: ready for the year to come, armed with peace and plenty.

My appetites are also starting to search for the bright, bold flavors of Spring. It's almost here, but not quite, but that doesn't stop me from looking for the first tastes. I have a few tricks up my sleeve that I want to share with you this week, two of which are more technique than recipe. I encourage you to play with these using your CSA contents. The possibilities for these recipes are limitless using the produce available at this time of year, so relax, pour that second glass of wine, and get stuck in creating those first tastes of the new year!

Leek Bread Pudding

What could be better than bread pudding on a blustery day? Savory bread pudding that packs a ton of vegetables into it! And bread pudding is super forgiving regarding its mix-ins. Don't have Gruyere or Swiss? Use cheddar! Don't have leeks? Use caramelized onions! Stick in some roasted butternut, sautéed cabbage, a handful of parsley. Bread pudding just does not care what you give it, it will always give you something delicious in return. This particular formula is from Thomas Keller's *Ad Hoc at Home*, by way of Smitten Kitchen, and then further adapted by yours truly.

Notes: This is greatly improved if you serve it by the slice with a poached egg on top. Trust me.

1 cup leeks in 1/2-inch thick slices, white and light green parts only, cleaned and rinsed
Kosher salt
2 tablespoons unsalted butter

Freshly ground black pepper
6 cups 1-inch-cubed bread (any kind really)
2 teaspoons finely chopped chives
1/2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves (or oregano, or marjoram)
2 eggs
3 cups whole milk, heavy cream or half-and-half or a combination thereof
1/2 cup shredded Gruyere or Swiss Cheese

Drain excess water from leeks, and add to a large hot pan. Season with salt, and sauté until leeks begin to soften, about 5 minutes, then reduce heat to medium-low. Stir in butter. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until leeks are very soft, about 20 minutes. Adjust salt and pepper to taste.

Prep a loaf tin (or 8 x 8 pyrex pan) with butter and parchment if you have it handy.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. While leeks are cooking, in a large bowl lightly whisk the eggs, then whisk in milk or cream, a generous pinch of salt, pepper. Add bread and stir to coat thoroughly. Let sit for 20 minutes. Add leeks (or whatever vegetable you are using), herbs, cheese, or other mix ins you are adding to your recipe and stir to combine.

Add bread mixture to prepared pan. Sprinkle with salt. Bake until pudding is set and top is brown and bubbling, about 55 to 65 minutes. Serve hot or at room temperature. Great with aforementioned poached egg, and alongside a salad of winter lettuces.

This Week's Box List

Romanesco or Cauliflower
Bok Choy
Cabbage
Celery
Leeks
Daikon
Spinach
Parsley
Apples (Hidden Star Orchards)
Mandarins (Bill Crepps* - Not certified organic)
Grapefruit

*Bill Crepps is a long time friend and local farmer. His crops are not organic certified, but are sustainably grown. This doesn't change the way he farms and the taste of the mandarins will tell you they are grown with the utmost care.

All recipes can be found at: www.eatwell.com under the "CSA Farm Box" tab. Just click "Recipes."