



WEEK OF FEBRUARY 12TH, 2018 #7/52

Chickens And Eggs

This is an article from the newsletter of **February 2, 1999**. Most of us are pretty addicted to our Eatwell Eggs, and find the notion of having an egg Off Season unimaginable, but that is how it was back in the beginning. And I believe there was a gap of several years when Nigel gave up on the chickens altogether, now that is truly unimaginable! The chickens play a major role on the farm, fertility, pest and weed control, and of course those delicious eggs. Running a chicken operation like ours is an enormous commitment, financially and in terms of man hours, but very much worth it.



A quick side note: As Cameron and I headed out for our weekly farm walk, we found Jose and Agustin in the process of moving the house that has the newest flock of birds. When chicks first arrive, their house is parked up next to the pond. Up here we have access to power for their lights. The girls are just about 3 months old, and getting really big. They are ready for some pasture, so it is moving day. Big problem, flat tires on the house! Agustin and Jose had to lift the house just a little with the forklift we borrow from our generous neighbors next door. It is challenging lifting those giant houses, but they got the job done, and the girls are now out on pasture. Pullet lovers, we have about 3 months to go before they start laying.

Here are the words from that long ago newsletter article by Nigel:

“Many of you are asking when the egg subscriptions will return. The ‘Ladies’ have just gone through the molting process when they grow a new set of feathers and shed the old ones. They look very fine now. Our plan for the chickens was to have them as part of the farm’s fertility program. They are moved around every three months or so. We are currently evaluating the costs and benefits to see where we proceed from here. There will be egg subscriptions offered soon, on a limited basis. Watch this space for more details.”

Help! What Do I Do With....

One of the biggest issues that faces those of you who are smart enough to get your veg straight from a farm CSA, is “what do I do with these things I have never had before???” It is one of the biggest reasons people are afraid to join a CSA. Funny how we are programmed, isn’t it? To be afraid of vegetables. In any case, we have help for you, and I know many of you aren’t even aware of it. On the website you will find information about how to store each item in your share, and what you should eat first, and what is ok to hold and store. To make finding that information easy, we include a link in the weekly “Don’t Forget To Pickup Your Box” email. The website also has loads of recipes. The Eatwell’ers Slack group is another great resource. I find when I ask for help on Slack, I almost always get an answer within a couple of hours. This week was a great example! I asked for a recipe using Bok Choy that was different from the typical stir fry and boom! One of our members posted the perfect recipe for this week’s share. I have included it in the recipes. Big Thank You to Celeste who shared it.



Missed The Photo OP

The poplars are still leafless, so you can see many nests. As we walked to the end of the farm, I looked up and spotted a giant owl sitting just below one of the nests. Sadly I didn’t have my camera open and in my hand. Before I got it all together I watched that majestic bird fly away. What a wing span! I really can’t get over how many birds we have living with us here at Eatwell. I was never a fan of our winged friends (that dates back to early childhood trauma), but my love is quickly growing. The owls and hawks are great because they help us reduce the rodent population. With the amount of ground squirrels we have, we can use all the help we can get.



Our First Headstart Order 2018

The first major project Cameron worked on when he came back to the farm last summer was our seed/Headstart orders. I can’t tell you what an enormous project this was, there were so many layers and pieces to consider, it made me feel like my head would explode. Nigel had most of this information in *his* head, and over the past few years, with all the cancer treatment, he hadn’t kept logs.

We now have a giant spread sheet that tells us what seeds, which variety, how many, from whom, days to germination, when the seeds arrive here or go to Headstart, which weeks do we expect those starts and when does that crop go into your CSA box. It is crazy, but with that information Cameron and I sat down in early December and got our seed/Headstart orders put together for all of 2018! POs were created for the entire year, and last Thursday, the first one arrived. I think we both felt a good amount of satisfaction. Wonder how I will feel when I see the bill :)

RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

Creamy Winter Vegetable Stew With Mustard and Lemon

Recipe from The First Mess by Laura Wright

Laura's idea for this recipe was to use many winter-white veggies, but as we do not have parsnips, perhaps you could use a bit of carrot or turnips? It also calls for celery root (celeriac), but I think you could use some potato instead.

1 TB Virgin Olive Oil
1 large Onion, small dice - about 1 3/4 cups
1 Leek, small dice - white and light green part only
4 cloves Garlic, minced
2 tsp minced fresh Thyme leaves
1 medium parsnip, peeled and chopped (substitute turnips and or carrot)
1 1/2 cups Celery Root (potato instead?), peeled, chopped into 1" pieces
2 cups Romanesco florets (original recipe is cauliflower)
1 1/2 TB grainy Mustard
Salt and Pepper, to taste
2 tsp Nutritional Yeast
1 tsp Old Bay Seasoning
1/4 cup fresh Lemon Juice
3 1/2 cups Vegetable Stock, plus extra if needed

Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy bottomed pot over medium heat. Add the diced onions and saute until soft and translucent, about 4 minutes. Add the leeks and continue to saute until the leeks are soft, about 4 minutes more. Add the minced garlic and thyme, and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds, stirring constantly. Add the chopped parsnip (turnips and or carrots), celery root (potato) and Romanesco florets and stir to coat in the oil. Add the grainy mustard, salt and pepper, nutritional yeast and Old Bay seasoning. Stir to coat vegetables in the spices. Add the lemon juice and stir. Add the vegetable stock, stir again, cover, and bring to a boil. Once boiling, remove the lid and reduce the heat to a simmer. Let the chowder cook and bubble until the root veg are tender, about 15 to 18 minutes. Ladle half of the stew into a blender and carefully puree until smooth. Pour the pureed portion of stew back into the soup pot. If the stew is too thick, add enough vegetable stock to loosen it up to your liking. Bring the stew back to a boil and serve hot.

Hearty Cabbage Soup

Recipe from Genius Kitchen Rick Young

2 TB Butter
1 large Onion, diced
1 stalk Celery, diced
2 cups Cabbage, shredded
3 Potatoes, peeled and thickly sliced
6 cups Chicken Stock, divided
1 TB fresh Dill, chopped
2 TB Flour
1/2 cup Sour Cream
Salt and Pepper, to taste

Melt butter in saucepan over medium heat. Add onion, celery, cabbage, salt, and pepper. Partly cover and cook for 10 minutes over low heat. Add potatoes, chicken stock, and dill. Bring to a boil while stirring periodically. Boil, partly covered, for 20 minutes. Mix the flour with the sour cream in a bowl. Add 1/2 cup of the hot soup stock to bowl, mix well and pour into soup. Mix well and serve.

Creamy Pasta with Ham and Pea Shoots

Farmhouse Kitchen recipe

Next month I am going to visit Emily, our former CSA Manager, in northern Italy! Looking at places to visit in that region of Italy, one can not ignore the fact that you are in the heart of Parmesan and Prosciutto country! Looking at pictures I found myself suffering with an intense craving for a cream based pasta sauce with ham and peas. Well I had ham and I had pea shoots and I had cream, craving very much satisfied! So here is what I did....

1 lb Pasta, I used Spaghetti because that is what I had
1/2 to 1 full bunch of Pea Shoots, washed and chopped
1 cup or more Ham, cut into 1/2" cubes
1 1/2 to 2 cups Cream
3 TB Butter
Salt and Pepper
Nutmeg, to taste
Parmesan Cheese
Bring a large pot of salted water to boil, and cook pasta according to package directions.

In a heavy-bottomed sauce pan, heat the cream with the pea shoots, ham, a bit of nutmeg and the butter. Bring to a low simmer and allow to cook for a few minutes to infuse the cream with the flavor of the ham. Just before the pasta is done, add a good amount (3 TB?) of Parmesan to the cream sauce, and stir well. Taste and add salt and pepper as desired. When the pasta is done, drain it and quickly rinse away the starch. You can add a bit of olive oil or butter to the pasta. Plate up the pasta and ladle on as much sauce as you like. I use tongs to mix it well in the bowl. I keep the pasta and sauce separate because if you have leftovers, it will keep better. If you pre-mix it all, and you do have leftovers, the pasta will absorb all the sauce.

This Week's Box List

**Items in Box for 2*

Leeks
*Dill
*Arugula
Lettuce
*Cabbage
Pea Shoots
*Romanesco
Turnips
*Bok Choy
*Carrots (From Terra Firma Farm)
Pomelos
*Apples (From Hidden Star Ranch)

Lacto-Fermented Vegetables

One of our Slack Eatwellers, Maggie shared this recipe last week Sichuan PaoCai Sichuan Pickles, the recipe is from Food52. It reminded me of how great pickling/fermenting is to use up bits and bobs that you haven't finished off in other dishes. And you could certainly add some Bok Choy stems!). You can find this particular recipe on Food52 or on our Slack page. At the Cultures For Health website you will find many basic recipes for fermented vegetables, many are in our current box rotations. Here is a recipe for fermented Carrots and Parsnips, but I am using Turnips, since we do not grow Parsnips.

1 lb Turnips
1 lb Carrots
1 tsp fresh, grated Ginger
1/4 tsp Red Pepper flakes
2 TB Sea Salt
4 cups Water

Wash turnips and carrots well. Remove tops and cut lengthwise into rounds. Place grated ginger and red pepper flakes in the bottom of a quart jar. Place turnips and carrots atop ginger and red pepper flakes, alternating and packing them in tight. Leave 1" of headspace at the top of the jar. Make a brine of 4 cups water to 2 TB sea salt. Stir to dissolve salt and pour over vegetables, leaving 1" headspace. Place the lid on the jar. Ferment at room temp for 5 to 10 days. You will want to burp the jar daily to release the fermentation gases. Also, you want to make sure the turnips and carrots remain submerged. My experience with our vegetables has been a fast fermentation, so give it a taste after a few days to see where you are. Once it is done, should have a nice kraut-y tang, you can store it in the fridge.

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