



WEEK OF MARCH 5TH 2018 #10/52

Winter/Spring Transition

It is that time of year when we have a lot of hit and miss out in the field. The weather really hasn't been cooperating much, either sunny and quite warm, or sunny windy and freezing cold, or horrible rain and wind. We have thousands of plants that have gone into the ground recently, and this is all pretty tough on them. Even Terra Firma, the farm we get the carrots from, isn't sure they will be able to get into the field to harvest carrots this weekend. But as Nigel always said, farming is one gamble after another.



Finding My Voice

And yes, the van is stuck in the mud. This has happened twice in the last 2 months. The first time Cameron got my car stuck on his way out to deal with the wild dogs, and the second was yesterday, when Maysam and I were going out to deal with the Nest that had blown over in the storm. Both times I expressed my concern, saying it probably wasn't a good idea, both times I was told it would be fine. Both times I was right. Believe me this is not about me being right, because ultimately I was wrong. I was seriously wrong for not being comfortable with telling someone "no, I know better". When you take on a life running a business you have to learn to be strong, and understand when you need to be firm, and when you say no, you mean no. How is anyone else going to understand that if I don't? Hopefully the lesson has been learned, and even though vehicles got stuck in the mud, I no longer will be.

Mentors and Friends

Nigel had a mentor, Jim Schrupp. He cherished having someone to turn to who is so experienced in the farming world. Jim was the man Nigel asked when he needed anything or everything; a recommendation for a lawyer, or where to find parts or equipment to do whatever crazy project he was currently working on, how to deal with squirrels or just general advice. Nigel told me many times he felt it was important for him to be a mentor to young farmers, because he knew how important it was having Jim in his life. One of the greatest things about Jim is his wife Georgeanne Brennan, cookbook author and seed importer. She has amazing insight and valuable experience with unique plant varieties, which Nigel often grew based on her recommendation. I am very fortunate to have inherited them both, we visit often over a glass of bubbles. Each visit brings precious nuggets of something, cooking or recipe tips, planting advice, connections, you name it, it all happens at a sweet wine shop in Winters!



In 1982, Georgeanne, along with her partner Charlotte Glenn, started a seed company called Le Marche Seeds. They imported seeds from Europe, focussing only on older, non-hybrid varieties. Georgeanne was looking for the vegetables and fruits she ate while living in Provence in the 70's. Le Marché Seeds was the first company to bring to the US Mesclun, Charentais Melons (the melons we grow), Chioggia Beets and Lacinato Kale!

According to Jim, it was Nigel who first began calling it Dino Kale. Perhaps that was what it was known as in England? Not sure why Nigel called it Dino Kale, but that is the story Jim shared with me recently. This is a photo of Georgeanne in the trial fields in Cesena Italy back in 1984. Hard to imagine a world without Dino Kale, it is so popular these days. Seldom do we consider how things get started, like special varieties of kale. There are so many delicious foods we enjoy everyday because of the work of people like Georgeanne. If you would like to read more about the work she did here is a link to an article I found from the Oakland Standard - <http://theoaklandstandard.museumca.org/it-all-starts-seed>

Nigel's Memorial

Because many of you are every other week people, I want to make sure everyone gets to see this information. So forgive me for the repeat from last week:

When Nigel passed away I chose to postpone his memorial until this summer. I was so overwhelmed at the time, and truly felt I could not organize something that would do him justice. Honestly, I couldn't be very present. I had hoped that given the space of many months, the process and ideas for his memorial would be easier. I don't think it has, but now I have the advantage of time to plan something a bit more worthy of someone who gave so much.

Nigel's memorial is scheduled for June 17th. It is the weekend right around the time of our Solstice/Garlic Party. This year, rather than garlic harvest/braiding I would like us to take on a project and make something special for the Members' Garden, a permanent memorial to Nigel. For years he dreamed of building a big pizza oven out there, so of course that is my first thought. I think it could be an excellent community project to do together, but I will need your help.

Here is an update since last week. I have been in touch with Miguel Elliott who builds incredible cobb and earth structures, including pizza ovens. He will be taking on this project and I hope to have many of you join us. It will span over two weekends, so there is plenty of opportunity for you to participate. Later this week I will send out an email explaining the project more clearly. Regarding the memorial, we will send out an invitation via Brown Paper Tickets to make sure we can accommodate as many people as possible.

RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

Quinoa and Bok Choy Soup

Recipe found on Genius Kitchen

Who knew this was a thing? I made bok choy and quinoa last week, and it was a great combo, but I honestly can't remember what all I put into the dish. So I googled quinoa and bok choy and found this.

3 Garlic cloves, minced
1 TB ground Ginger, I would use fresh ginger, but that would be less than a TB
1 cup quinoa, rinsed
7 cups Chicken Broth or Vegetable Stock
2 TB Soy Sauce
2 TB Rice Vinegar
1 TB Toasted Sesame Oil
1 lb Shitake or Cremini Mushrooms, sliced
6 cups sliced Bok Choy
3/4 cup thinly sliced Green Onion
Salt and Pepper
Garlic Chives for Garnish

In a large pot combine garlic, ginger, quinoa, broth, soy sauce, vinegar and oil. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes or until quinoa is tender. Stir in mushrooms and simmer, uncovered until mushrooms are tender. Stir in bok choy and onions; simmer for 3-4 minutes or until bok choy is wilted. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Baked Spinach Balls

Recipe adapted from Genius Kitchen

These looked really yummy. I love meatballs, and the idea of a meatless meatball actually sounds like fun, especially since spinach goes so nicely with pasta and tomato sauce. I was thinking it would be really nice to mix the spinach and the chard. The original recipe calls for frozen spinach so I have adjusted this to make it work with fresh.

20 oz of chopped Spinach and Chard
3/4 cup Butter, softened
2 cups Herb-Seasoned Stuffing Crumbs
1 cup Parmesan Cheese, fresh grated
2 TB finely minced Onion
1/4 tsp Salt
4 large Eggs
1/2 tsp Black Pepper
1/4 tsp Nutmeg

Cook the spinach and chard until tender. Drain in a colander, pressing to squeeze out as much liquid as possible. In a large bowl, combine the warm spinach/chard with the softened butter. Add the stuffing crumbs, Parmesan cheese and minced onion; mix well. At this point, before you add the eggs, taste and add salt, pepper and nutmeg. The amount of salt will depend on the saltiness of the stuffing crumbs. In a small bowl, whisk the eggs lightly. Add the eggs to the mixture; blend thoroughly. Chill the mixture for about 30 minutes. Heat the oven to 350 F. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper, or brush with a little olive oil. Using a rounded teaspoon or small cookie scoop, shape the mixture into small balls. If it is sticking to your hands, dampen them with water as you work. Put fine dry bread crumbs in a plate or bowl, if using. Roll the balls in the breadcrumbs until they are lightly coated. Arrange the balls on the prepared baking sheets. Leave about 1/2" between the ball (they don't spread). Bake in the preheated oven for about 15 to 20 minutes, or until they feel firm to the touch. You can serve these as an appetizer, or in a pasta dish with red sauce.

Tips On Storing Your Produce:

- **Garlic Chives**- Store in the refrigerator, wrapped in plastic. Should last 3-5 days.
- **Kale & Chard**- Remove any bands, twist ties, etc. Most greens must be kept in an air-tight container with a damp cloth to keep them from drying out. Keeps up to a week.
- **Bok Choy**- Store in a plastic bag in fridge up to one week. Don't forget to use the ribs!
- **Turnips**- Remove the greens (store separately) same as radishes and beets, store them in an open container with a moist cloth.

To view more storage tips, go to eatwell.com >> "CSA Farm Box" >> "This Week's Box" tab.

Kale & Turnips Curry

Recipe from The Farmhouse Kitchen

Not the easiest time of year to do recipes, too many this or that's and maybes. But that is part of living seasonally and fresh off the farm. I am so glad you are all on this journey with me!

The other night dinner took off in about three different directions. This is what I ended up with, a very tasty kale curry. I didn't write down the recipe, but this is pretty close to what I did:

2-3 TB Coconut Oil
2 or so Leeks, washed and cut into rounds
Kale, washed and chopped pretty small
1 bunch Turnips, big ones quartered, small ones left as they are, tops and tails removed (Keep the greens and mix with Kale)
A couple of Carrots, washed and diced
2-3 cloves Garlic, grated on a micro plane
A good sized piece of Ginger, grated on a micro plane
1 can Coconut Milk
Zest from 1 Lemon

This is the tricky portion size part, but this is roughly what I used:

1 or 2 TB Curry Powder
1/2 tsp Turmeric Powder
1 tsp Fennel Seeds
1 TB Mustard Seeds
Salt and Pepper, to taste
A pinch of Chill Flakes if you like a little heat
Cilantro, chopped for garnish

Heat a large skillet over medium-high and toss in the mustard and fennel seeds. Shaking the pan let them heat up and toast. Add the coconut oil. Once melted add the garlic, leeks, turnips and carrots and saute until they begin to soften. Add the rest of the spices, mix well, then add the chopped kale. Mix well and cook until the kale is well wilted, then add the coconut milk. Turn heat down to low, cover and let cook on a very low simmer until the kale is nice and tender. When it's all ready, add the lemon zest. Taste for salt and pepper and adjust if need be. Serve over rice and top with chopped cilantro.

Kale-Sauce Pasta

Recipe from NYT sent to me by the Tilles Family

This put such a smile on my face. A few years back, at breakfast for one of the CSA overnight events, I had the pleasure of great conversation with the Tilles family. Much of that conversation was about their love of kale. I shared my opinion on the importance of eating seasonally, and they shared their need for year round kale. A great friendship, with an amazing family grew out of all of that, so it makes me really happy to share this kale recipe you all.

Kosher Salt, to taste
1/4 cup Extra-Virgin Olive Oil, plus more for serving
2 cloves Garlic, smashed flat and peeled
1 pound Kale, thick ribs removed
Freshly ground Black Pepper, to taste
1/2 pound pasta, like Pappardelle or rigatoni
3/4 cup coarsely grated Parmigiano- Reggiano

Put a large pot of generously salted water over high heat, and bring to a boil. In a small skillet over medium heat, add olive oil and garlic, and cook until the garlic begins to sizzle. Reduce heat to low, and cook very gently until garlic is soft and begins to turn light gold, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat. When water is boiling, add kale leaves, and cook until tender, but not mushy, about 5 minutes. Pull out the hot, dripping kale leaves with tongs, and put directly into a blender. (Don't drain the pot; you'll use that same boiling water to cook the pasta.) Add garlic and its oil to the blender, along with a splash of hot water from the pot if you need some more liquid to get the blender going. Blend into a fine, thick green purée. Taste, and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper, then blend again. Add the pasta to the still-boiling water, and cook according to directions on the package. Ladle out about a cup of the water to save for finishing the dish, then drain the pasta and return it to the dry pot. Add the kale purée, about 3/4 of the grated cheese and a splash of the reserved pasta water. Toss until all the pasta is well coated and bright green, adding another splash of pasta water if needed so that the sauce is loose and almost creamy in texture. Serve in bowls right away, and top with an extra drizzle of olive oil and the rest of the grated cheese.