



WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 26TH 2016 #39/52



Leeks

Walking around the farm the other day, I was happy to see the leeks are looking really beautiful. Sweet Potatoes and Winter Squash are great signals of a new season, but the leeks say the same thing.

Certainly not a summer crop, leeks just shout out colder weather food. We have had a few at the market the past couple of weeks, but they aren't quite ready enough for all of the CSA shares. Something to look forward to.



Working In The Orchard

This past year Agustin hatched nearly 70 goslings. That number is really pretty fantastic considering geese don't lay many eggs in a year. The new gaggle of geese were meant to live in the orchard as our new group of farm workers. Geese eat the tall grasses out in the orchard. Actually, they are very good at it, as we've quickly discovered. Now we do have a flame weeder sitting in the orchard, but no one here feels comfortable operating that machine and so it is never used. When we learned geese love to eat Johnson Grass, which is a big problem for us, we knew we had the perfect solution. If you look at the photo of the orchard you can clearly see the excellent job the geese have done eating the grass and weeds down to bare ground. The right side of the photo is what it looked like before geese. The tricky thing for us is moving them fast enough, as we don't want them over fertilizing the trees. Of course some fertility, the excellent by-product of geese or chickens or sheep, etc, is certainly desired. However, when the trees get too much fertility they shoot up taller and actually produce less fruit. Definitely not our desired outcome. As with many things here on the farm, there is a very intricately timed dance when working with nature, which is preferred over working against it or instead of it.



The CSA

Last week we had a bit of a dip in numbers, but this week we are right back up again. At over 550 we are moving in the right direction, but are still 150 from my goal of 700. Connie has been working hard setting up a few new drop sites,



rearranging pick up locations for Rickshaw, and answering many questions from new members. It is not an easy task, but she does it so well, and I am so very grateful for all the attention to detail she gives this job. One of the projects Connie is working on is expanding our delivery range with Rickshaw. If you are not familiar with them, they are the home delivery service we use in San Francisco. Rickshaw recently expanded their delivery zones to include the Peninsula and part of the East Bay. We are hoping to have this option available in the next week or two. If you have friends or family, particularly down the Peninsula, where we do not currently deliver, please let them know we are coming!

Pumpkin Disappointment

As far as I know, this is the first time we have had to cancel the Pumpkin Party. I asked Nigel how long we have been doing the Pumpkin Party, but he just scratched his head and said "a very long time". You may have read in an earlier newsletter that we have had a serious problem with ground squirrels this year. The damage they have caused to the winter squash has been pretty severe. We believe the crop was weakened and therefore more susceptible to white fly and just generally not very robust. Why so many ground squirrels? Hard to say for sure, I suspect there are a few reasons, but one factor is fewer coyotes. When the ranchers hunt too many coyotes, it throws the balance off, and we certainly haven't heard as many at night as we normally do. I think another problem was the tomato field next door was harvested and disked under in about 4 days. When they cleared the field that fast, I saw squirrels running over to our property looking for new homes. Whatever the reason, it is always hard to have a crop fail or nearly fail. To have a crop failure also be the reason we have to cancel our last event of the year is doubly disappointing.



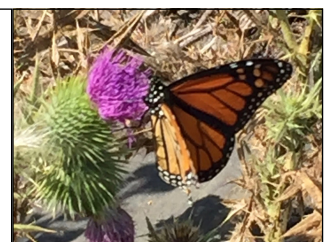
Working the Pond

As I said, the geese that were hatched this year were meant for the orchard. Unfortunately, there was a drop in communication between Nigel and Agustin. One sad day, I realized ALL the geese were



missing from the pond. I was heartbroken! Over the past two years that we have had them, I have become pretty familiar with many of them. Many mornings, I would come out to the kitchen and see several geese sleeping just outside our front door. There was one pair in particular who spent a lot of time around the house, coming to the front door and tapping with their beaks. Pretty hilarious, actually, when you are sitting at the table and all of a sudden you hear tap, tap, tap, and you look over to see a goose staring back at you. This morning when I went out to feed Stella I looked across the pond and saw a nice group of geese out enjoying the early morning, pure joy!

This Week's Total CSA Boxes: 553



Recipes and Menu Suggestions

Malfatti with Fresh Tomato Sauce

Uses: Chard, Onion, Tomatoes

Roasted Sweet Potato Rounds with Fried Sage Leaves; with Sautéed Stir Fry Mix and your choice of protein

Uses: Sweet Potatoes, Sage, Stir Fry Mix

Radish, Tomato, Avocado Salad; with good crusty bread and grilled chicken breast

Uses: Radishes and Cherry Tomatoes, Watermelon

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

Tomatillos For The Winter

Last week, Liz and I made more Enchiladas with Roasted Tomatillo Sauce. Yes enchiladas are a lot of work, but once you have all the pieces, it comes together really quickly. Such a hearty dish and would be perfect for a Super Bowl party or cold winter dinner. This week, I would like to suggest you roast the tomatillos and freeze the sauce. Roasting Tomatillos for a sauce base is as simple as this recipe from Rick Bayless.

1 lb Tomatillos, paper husks removed
1 or 2 Chiles, like Serrano or Jalapeño
1 small Onion, sliced to 1/2" slices
4 cloves Garlic, don't peel

Put them on a low rimmed baking sheet and pop under a preheated broiler. Cook 4 to 5 minutes, until things begin to blister. Toss and cook until everything is soft. Remove from the oven and allow to cool. Once cool enough to handle, remove the skin from the garlic and stems from chiles. Put all the vegetables, with a teaspoon of salt, into a blender and run until it is a coarse puree. Put into a container and freeze. Later you can add chicken stock to thin to the consistency you want your sauce, or not. Find your favorite recipe or maybe just follow Rick Bayless's full recipe for Roasted Tomatillo Enchiladas. I bet, come January or February, you will be very happy to find this little gem in your freezer!

Radish, Tomato, Avocado Salad with Balsamic Dressing

Recipe from juliasalbum.com
Serves 8

1 basket of Cherry Tomatoes, cut in half
2 Avocados, diced
1 large Cucumber, thinly sliced
5 Green Onions, chopped
10 Radishes, thinly sliced
1/4 cup Olive Oil
1/4 cup Balsamic Vinegar
3 TB Honey, warmed
2 cloves Garlic, minced
Salt and Pepper to taste

In a large bowl, combine halved cherry tomatoes, diced avocado, thinly sliced cucumber, chopped green onions and thinly sliced radishes. In a small bowl, make a salad dressing: whisk olive oil, balsamic vinegar, honey and minced garlic until nice and smooth. Add the salad dressing to the large bowl with salad, sprinkle with a small amount of salt and pepper, and toss to combine. Taste and season more if needed.

*You could play with the recipe a bit and add some chunks of watermelon in place of cucumber.

Malfatti with Tomato Sauce

Recipe from cookyourdream.com

Serves 4

This version serves the Malfatti with tomato sauce, but there are many recipes with brown sage butter.

1 TB Butter
3 TB Onion, finely chopped
3 1/2 oz fresh Chard
Salt and freshly ground Pepper
Pinch of grated Nutmeg
8 1/2 oz Ricotta Cheese
2 oz grated Parmesan
1 Eatwell Farm Egg + 1 Yolk
1 to 4 oz Semolina or All-Purpose Flour

Melt the butter in a frying pan and sauté onion for about 4 minutes. Add chard leaves, season with salt, pepper and nutmeg and cook for 5 minutes until wilted. Drain in a sieve placed over a medium bowl, pressing to squeeze out excess liquid. Save the squeezed liquid. Chop the chard. In a large mixing bowl, combine drained ricotta, parmesan, egg, egg yolk, chopped chard and chard liquid. Season with salt if needed. Start adding flour/semolina, mixing well between each addition, to get a soft mixture but not very sticky. If you make the mixture too thick, the malfatti will get heavy and chewy. Sprinkle some flour on a plate. Form the mixture into small egg-shaped pieces using two spoons dipped into hot water. Place them carefully on a plate, sprinkle some more flour over and refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours. To cook the malfatti, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the malfatti in batches so that they have enough space and water to cook. When they float to the surface continue cooking for another 1-2 minutes. Remove them with a slotted spoon, drain and keep warm until all the malfatti are done. Divide them between plates, pour tomato sauce over and sprinkle with parmesan and oregano leaves.

This Week's Box List

Sweet Potatoes
Cherry Tomatoes
Red Tomatoes
Tomatillos
Chard
Stir Fry Mix
Radishes
Onions
Sage
Strawberries
Watermelon

FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE:

2 TB Olive Oil

2 Garlic cloves, chopped
Salt
1/2 dried Chili Pepper OR use as many of your Lunchbox Peppers as you would like, keeping in mind that will not make for a spicy tomato sauce.
1 lb Red Tomatoes, cored and chopped coarsely
2 tsp fresh Oregano, finely chopped
Extra Parmesan, to serve
Prepare the tomato sauce. Heat olive oil in a pan, add garlic and chili pepper, and fry for a minute. If you are using lunchbox peppers, chop them to the size you prefer and add them in with the garlic. Stir in the chopped tomatoes, season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally for 15 - 20 minutes, until tomatoes and peppers are soft.

Roasted Sweet Potatoes with Fried Sage Leaves

Recipe from Epicurious

3 large Garlic cloves
1/4 cup Olive Oil
2 1/2 lbs Sweet Potatoes, peeled and sliced into 1/2" thick rounds
For the Sage:
1/3 cup Olive Oil
24 Sage Leaves

Preheat oven to 450 F with rack in upper third. Puree garlic with oil and 3/4 tsp salt in a blender until smooth. Toss sweet potatoes with garlic oil in a large bowl, then spread in 1 layer in a 15 by 10" shallow baking pan. Bake until golden in patches and cooked through, 20 to 30 minutes. To fry sage leaves, heat oil in a small heavy skillet over medium-high heat until it shimmers, then fry sage leaves in 2 batches, stirring, until crisp, 30 seconds to 1 minute per batch. Transfer with a slotted spoon to paper towels to drain. Serve sweet potatoes with sage leaves scattered on top.

