



WEEK OF DECEMBER 4TH 2017 #49/52

Working On Seeds

Cameron and I spent much of the week working on the seed/plant orders for the coming year. After hours of compiling information from the last two years' invoices for seeds, plants, and Headstart orders, it is time to start putting orders together, and get next year's plan on paper. Cameron did an amazing job of collating that massive amount of information, and I can assure you it wasn't simple. Nigel never planned for not being here, and so we don't have a list to guide us through this process. There are no simple or clear records of exactly what he ordered, when they were planted, how much was planted, how he put his mixes together, so it has been an enormous project pulling that puzzle apart and putting it back together again. I believe he never truly understood just how amazing his brain was, and how much information he juggled all the time, and how that is not a simple thing to decipher.

None the less, we have come to a place where PO's are being generated, and we are getting a sense of what we will grow next year and when. I am sure there will be a few things to slip through the cracks, but I feel very positive about the work Cameron has put into this project, and because of that I am confident our mistakes will be manageable.



Mixing Seeds

Much of what we plant on the farm is started for us by the company Headstart. Doing our own starts is challenging; the pH of our water is not ideal, and it requires man power to manage, which we don't have. Years ago, Nigel made the decision to give up doing starts on the farm and sent them all to Headstart. The past few years we have done mixed seeds for many of our crops because it made harvesting a bit easier, and saved us tremendous money on our start costs. Headstart charges \$157 for a 1,000 plants, but when we jump to 2,001 plants, the price drops to \$83 per 1,000. If we can get up to 5,001 it goes down to \$54 per 1000. As you can see, we save a lot by sowing more seeds, and clearly being able to mix varieties really helped.

Unfortunately, this year, Headstart decided we could no longer send them seeds, AND no more mixing. This is a problem for a few reasons, firstly, we don't need 5,000 seeds of each variety at each planting. As an example we grow several types of cabbage: pointy cabbage, red, green, savoy, napa and a few different varieties of each of those types. It is important for us to maintain a good variety for the CSA shares, because no one wants red cabbage, week after week. What you do with savoy cabbage can be quite different to what you do with a pointy or a red cabbage. Clearly growing only 1,000 of each would make our Headstart costs astronomically expensive. You can understand the predicament we are in, and this is on top of our novice farmer status.

But we persevered, Nigel taught us that for sure, and with some juggling, Cameron and I came up with ways to modify the orders. Now we will get half the variety mix in the first delivery, and the rest of the varieties in the second. The deliveries are only two weeks apart, so there shouldn't be any problem with a lack of variety. We still won't be able to hit the cost breaks Nigel was able to reach, but we will make it work.



Looking Ahead

Walking around the farm on a chilly fall morning, it is exciting to see how great the cabbages and the chard, and the other greens are looking. But even more exciting is seeing the garlic shooting straight up, nice and green. When I picked a bit off, the garlic aroma was strong and delicious. Walking further out we came to the strawberry beds. These are the plants that went into the ground this past August. They, too, are looking vibrant and strong. The leaves are a beautiful dark green and the plants are full and lush. These plants are promises of goodness to come next spring and summer.



RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

Gratineed Crespelle With Spinach & Butternut Filling

Recipe from *Gather* by Georgeann Brennan

The original recipe is made with spinach, mushrooms and a parmesan based sauce. Trying to keep it to as many Eatwell ingredients as I could, I used butternut squash instead of mushrooms. I had loads of chard in the house, so I used that instead of spinach. I also had a bunch of grated gruyere leftover from Thanksgiving so I switched that for the Parmesan.

For the Crespelle:

3/4 cup Flour

1 cup Whole Milk

2 Eggs

Pinch of Salt

2 TB Butter, for making the crespelle

Pour the milk into a mixing bowl, and very slowly whisk in the flour being careful not to let lumps form. Stir in the salt, and then the eggs whisking well until a thin batter forms. In an 8" pan, non-stick usually works best, melt 1 tsp butter and heat over medium-high heat. When it forams, pour 2 TB of batter, quickly tilting the pan from side to side to spread the batter evenly, creating a very thin layer.

Cook about 1 minute until the edges curl and a few bubbles form. Carefully flip over and cook the other side until golden, about a minute.

For the filling:

1 bag Spinach or 1 bunch Chard, wash well, leave whole

1/2 to 1 bunch Garlic Chives, finely chopped

1/2 Butternut Squash,peeled, roasted, cut into 1" cubes

Salt and Pepper, to taste

Pinch of Nutmeg

Bring a pot of water to boil. Turn the heat off and put in the greens. If you are using chard, put the stem side down first to give it a bit more time, then submerge the rest. You will have to do this in batches, unless you are using a very large pot. Only blanch until the greens turn bright. Put into a large strainer to drain and cool. If you feel you cooked them too long, plunge them into cold water then strain. Once cool enough squeeze as much liquid out as you can, then chop. Squeeze again. Put the greens and the garlic chives into a large bowl, sprinkle on some salt and pepper and the nutmeg, and mix well. Add the butternut squash and mix again. Use your hands, they will make this job much easier.

For the Sauce:

2 1/2 TB Unsalted Butter

2 TB All-Purpose Flour

1 3/4 cups Whole Milk

1/2 tsp Salt

1/2 tsp Pepper

1/4 tsp Cayenne

Pinch of Nutmeg

3/4 cup Gruyere Cheese

In a heavy bottomed sauce pan, melt the butter over medium-high heat. When it has melted, remove from the heat and whisk in the flour to make a roux, or paste. Return the pan to the heat and slowly drizzle in the milk, whisking it in thoroughly to prevent any lumping. Add the salt, pepper and cayenne and reduce the heat to medium. Continue to whisk from time to time, until the sauce has thickened. Add the Gruyere to the sauce and mix. Spoon about 1/2 cup of the sauce into the vegetable mix

Preheat the oven to 425 F. Butter a gratin or baking dish.

Take a crespelle and lay it out in the baking dish and fill with about 1 TB of filling. Roll carefully, then slide to the far side.

Repeat until you have used all of the crespelle. Pour the remaining sauce over the crespelle and bake for 10 minutes.

Pull them out and grate over some Parmesan cheese, slide the dish under the broiler for 3 to 5 minutes, until the top is golden brown, crispy and delicious!

Dark Leafy Greens

Recipe form *Tartine All Day* by Elizabeth Pruitt

Nancy, one of our wonderful CSA members sent this to me, so it is a CSA tried and true recipe. The recipe suggests serving this with a Lemon Garlic Dressing, rather than vinegar, which is typical of the Southern version of this style of dish. They also serve it along side poached eggs, or on ricotta toast. Hope y'all enjoy it!

1 lb Greens, you can add the turnip or radish tops into the option mix along with the chard and or spinach

2 TB Olive Oil

2 oz Salt Pork or Slab Bacon

Pinch of Red Pepper Flakes

Sea Salt

Freshly ground Black Pepper

1/4 cup Water

Strip the leaves from the stems. Rinse and dry the leaves and slice into wide ribbons. Chop the tender stems. Heat the oil in a medium pot over medium-high heat. Add the salt pork or bacon and cook for 4 to 5 minutes, until crisp. Add the red pepper flakes and the stem pieces, then pile the greens on top. Season with salt and pepper, add the water. Cover the pot, reduce the heat to low, let simmer for about 5 minutes. Remove the lid and check the greens and cooking for a few minutes, if needed, until tender.

This Week's Box List

*Items in Box for 2

Chard

*Lettuce

Spinach

*Arugula

*Bok Choy

Cabbage

Broccoli

Radish or Turnip

*Garlic Chives

*Butternut Squash

Apples

*Pomegranates

Bonus: Mandarins

Marinated Lentils With Crunchy Vegetables

Recipe by Claire Saffitz from *Bon Appetit*

I would play with this recipe by switching out a few ingredients. Since we do not have celery in the share this week, I would experiment using the bok choy, the stems are crunchy and the leaves are tender. I might try blanching the bok choy very quickly, and mostly the stem end, holding it in the water with tongs for a minute before submerging the entire thing. A few florets of Broccoli that you just lightly cook so they remain crunchy, would be a great addition to this dish as well!

1 large Onion, quartered through root end

2 Bay Leaves

1 1/2 cubs Black Beluga or French Green Lentils, rinsed, picked through

Kosher Salt

1/4 cup Olive Oil

1 tsp Coriander Seeds

1/2 tsp Cumin Seeds

3 TB Sherry Vinegar or Red Wine Vinegar

Freshly ground Black Pepper

6 Radishes, trimmed, very thinly sliced

4 Scallions, thinly sliced

1 cup Parsley and or Mint Leaves

1 cup thinly sliced Celery Hearts and leaves

Cook onion, bay leaves, and lentil in a large saucepan of simmering salted water until lentils are tender but still firm, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain; discard onion and bay leaves and transfer lentils to a medium bowl. Heat oil in a small skillet over medium. Cook coriander seeds and cumin seeds, swirling skillet, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add spice mixture and vinegar to lentil, season with salt and pepper, and toss to coat. Just before serving, top lentils with radishes, scallions, herbs, and celery, season with salt and pepper.

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