



WEEK OF DECEMBER 8TH 2014 #50/14

It did not take Agustin long to get the incubators out of the box and set up ready for testing. He is so excited, like me, to get this started. But we still have some work to do. The austrorlp breeding families have to be gathered together in their specific houses with the rooster assigned to them. They need two weeks with that rooster before we will set any eggs just to make sure the right paternity is selected. We hope to set the first eggs over the holidays.



Who is Who?

Back in October Jim from the Sustainable Poultry Network, our chicken consultant, evaluated every female. We have used numbered leg bands but they come off, so this time we decided to use colored zip ties. These can be loosely fitted to the legs but not come off. The chickens have stopped growing, so we can set the space around the zip tie confidently. We need to know because we record which hens lays an egg every day.



As you know, we are always experimenting here on the farm, and our change is what we do. We have built two domes. One I did not use any water proofing chemicals in the concrete and one I did. This one got a coat of the chemicals in a concrete layer last Saturday.

Learning Every Day

On Monday we had our annual organic inspection by California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF). It always takes three hours as we do not have a simple operation. I have noticed that over the years as we have eliminated organic composts and sprays it takes longer because I say I do not use these materials and get all my fertility from pasture. Each inspector seems to take it as a challenge to find something. This year, after spending two hours going through every invoice in our accounts, he found some clover seed that was pre-inoculated that I did not have the name of the the inoculant. I sent an email to the company to ask as there are, apparently inoculates that are GMO.

We toured the fields, and I realized that almost every crop we are growing we are trying something new or experimenting with it in some way. One thing can be assured of here is that in a year's time we will not be farming in the same way as we do today. The inspectors always have hard time with us because we are farming so beyond the organic norm. They then have to write their report and explain what we do. Many organic farmers, and yes some quite famous award winning ones, replace chemical nutrients with organic sources such as pelleted chicken manure from factory farms and compost from feed lot dairies. There are organic sprays to control pests which end up killing all the beneficial, good guys and gals too. I have been farming 33 years now, and I can honestly say that I am frustrated and excited about what I do not know, and that is a great deal. I am always reading, listening to lectures, conference tapes, podcasts etc. I try to go to a conference each year but it takes time and money. There have been two conferences in the last three years that have changed how we farm here. The first was AcresUSA in Kentucky where we met our chicken consultant Jim Adkins. The second was Permaculture Voices in Temecula last March where we got so many great inspirations it is hard to start detailing them. I do think the person who most inspired Lorraine and I there was Elaine Ingham. Elaine is a soil scientist that I heard many years ago talking about the unknown life in the soil and how we need to discover more about it. After 40 years of study and consulting, Elaine is very confident, teaches online classes and travels the world helping farmers restore their soil life. With our pastures and the resultant increase in fertility, Lorraine and I have so many questions. So much of what Elaine talks about makes sense to us now and we want to learn more. When we have more time and the \$2100 to do her class we will. We will get our own microscope to examine our soil life too. I am currently doing an online class in Holistic Management from the Savory Institute in Zimbabwe, Africa.

I have never been more excited about our farming. - Nigel



A farm tour in November. You need to come visit the farm too!

If you refer friends to our CSA program, please ask them to include your name in the, "How did you hear about us?" field when they sign up. You'll receive a jar of Nigel's home-made tomato sauce or jam as a thank you!

WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS!

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Recipes and Menu Suggestions

Roasted Chicken, Romanesco and Creamed Leeks

Uses: Romanesco, Leeks

Black Bean Chili with Roasted Butternut Squash and Celeriac -
Serve with Steamed Broccoli

Uses: Butternut Squash, Celeriac, Cilantro, Broccoli
Cabbage, Onion and Fennel serve with a Spinach and
Mandarin Salad

Uses: Cabbage or Kale, Spinach, Mandarins, grated
Watermelon Daikon

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

Holiday Gifts and Keeping It Simple

Every week at the market I talk to chefs who purchase our Daikon, Sweet Potatoes, Radicchio, Fennel, and Romanesco by the arm full. Many of them tell me they use them in really simple dishes. Just one example is at Central Kitchen where they salt and sear our Daikon on a very hot grill and serve. Here in the farmhouse kitchen I find many of my favorite recipes are incredibly simple, featuring fresh vegetables paired with one of our Farm Salts and now I add a splash of Verjuis. All of Eatwell's kitchen staples will simplify your cooking life, plus there is the bonus of easing the burden of holiday shopping, as they all make wonderful, thoughtful gifts that you can order online and have delivered with your CSA share.

Eatwell Farm Salts come in the following flavors: Lavender, Rosemary, Thyme, Lemon, Smoked Chili and Heirloom Tomato. All of the flavor ingredients are grown here on the farm and the salt is the best grey sea salt from Brittany. Roasted vegetables like Romanesco are amazing with a drizzle of good olive oil and Smoked Chili or Lemon Salt. I personally never make steak or hamburger without our Lavender Salt! Their application is endless, soups, stews, spaghetti sauce, lentils, taco mix.

This year we bottled our first batch of Eatwell Farm Verjuis (juice from unripened grapes). It is extremely acidic and can be used in place of vinegar or lemon juice. We just used it in place of lemon juice in our pie crust last week. I am now splashing all sautéed greens with Verjuis and plus a sprinkling of one of our Farm Salts, and easy peasy, done!

Freshly Milled Whole Heirloom Wheat Flour is nothing, and I mean absolutely nothing, like the whole wheat flour you buy in the store. The best way I can describe it is fluffy. Our flour makes the most delicious (and yes, fluffy) pancakes, fantastic bread and rolls and the best pie crust and chocolate chip cookies. For cookies and pie crust we do use 1/2 our flour and 1/2 white flour. With the rolls I make, I now use all our flour but unbleached white flour when rolling out the dough. Unlike store bought flour which is typically rancid, it has a delicious, nutty flavor. Sometimes baking fresh rolls will turn a simple soup into the most delightful winter meal, and using our fresh whole wheat flour will also make it more substantial and far more nutritious.



Lavender



Rosemary



Thyme



Smoked Chili



Lemon



Heirloom Tomato

Finishing Salts From The Farm Make Eating Well Simple

Holiday Gifts Continued

Lastly, I wanted to mention the Sugars: Lavender, Lemon Verbena, Rose Geranium, and Smoked Chili. What is a holiday season without cookie baking? Make your basic sugar cookie something very special with a sprinkling of one of our flavored sugars. Again, all the flavor ingredients are grown here at Eatwell and then blended with organic cane sugar. These sugars are used to finish, sprinkle or replace just a small portion of the sugar in one of your favorite recipes. I absolutely love hot chocolate and really enjoy it with a bit of a kick, so I use just a pinch of our Smoked Chili Sugar. And for a special twist on Creme Brûlée try mixing in some of the Rose Geranium Sugar, yum!

All of the Eatwell Farmhouse Kitchen supplies can be ordered with your CSA delivery as an extra item. They make wonderful gifts for friends, teachers, and family members, anyone who enjoys food. And don't forget yourself!

To order, log into your account and click on the category icons, add the items you wish to purchase to your cart and check out! If you place your order by 4pm the Sunday before your next delivery, your items will be delivered with your next box!

Roasted Chicken & Romanesco with Creamed Leeks

Eatwell Farmhouse Kitchen

1 Roasting Chicken
Eatwell Farm Rosemary, Lemon or Smoked Chili Salt
Pepper
Rub the chicken liberally with Eatwell Farm's Rosemary, Lemon or Smoked Chili Salt. Give it a good grinding of pepper. Roast until the internal temp reaches 160 F and the juices run clear.

Roasted Romanesco

Since the oven is on, go ahead and roast up the romanesco. Wash, then cut into individual florets. Put into a glass baking dish and drizzle with good olive oil, sprinkle with Eatwell Farm Rosemary, Smoked Chili or Lemon Salt, grind on some black pepper and roast. I usually roast romanesco at 425 F for about 20 minutes, then I give it a good toss with a large spoon and roast for another 5 minutes. Check to see if it done to your preference.

Creamed Leeks

Eatwell Farmhouse Kitchen

1 bunch Leeks, cut tops off but leave a good 2 + inches of green on, wash extremely well
3 TB Butter
2 TB Flour
1 tsp Eatwell Farm Lemon Salt
Freshly ground Black Pepper
1 TB Eatwell Farm Verjuis
1/2 cup Milk, Half & Half or Cream
3/4 cup Leek cooking Water

Cut the leeks in half lengthwise, make sure they are thoroughly washed. Lay down in a pan with about 1 inch of water and cook leeks until tender. In the meantime, melt butter in a heavy bottomed saucepan until foamy, then add flour. Stirring constantly, cook on medium heat until just turning golden. Take off heat, while whisking add the milk or cream or half & half. This will make a fairly thick paste, if not cook it just a bit more. Then add 1/2 cup of leek cooking water. Season with salt and pepper, and add a splash of Verjuis or a squeeze of lemon juice. Taste and adjust seasoning. If it is too thick you can add more of the cooking water.