



Ramblings

Yesterday, 3 families came up to sauce on the farm. Two of the families come to several events together each year and have for years now. They even met up on vacation in Japan this summer. I found out yesterday that they originally met at one of our farm events, and normally only see each other when they come up here together! And the other family realized that their kids went to school with the kids from one of the other families! Somehow we were all connected, and all that happened around food and the farm.



Last night talking to one of the members, Naomi, she recalled when she first moved to Germany many years ago, she was so surprised to find out that you went to the butcher for your meat, the bread baker for your bread, produce from the farmers markets, etc. To her, it was a completely foreign concept, and the idea seemed so inconvenient.... until she got into eating that way. Then she discovered the bread was better fresh from the baker, the meat was better fresh from the butcher, and it was really helpful to talk to someone who knew what they were selling and could advise and assist. What we have traded for the convenience of “Super Markets” maybe isn’t so super after all. The average American eats food that is produced to last and to travel, not to taste good, or even be good for us. There is no connection, or knowledge about how it is produced, and honestly most folks don’t give it any thought at all.

One of the conversations this morning was about visiting a coffee plantation in Hawaii and learning about the beans, and how they are grown and processed. And after the lessons having the chance to taste the different varieties. That was a truly eye opening experience, I guess much like going to a good winery where they spend time really explaining how they grow their grapes and produce their wines. And afterwards you get to taste wine. And just like learning about wine or coffee beans can foster an appreciation for those drinks, learning about food will do the same thing. Case in point, all of us crazy tomato saucers who spend hours

saucing and canning, know there is just no going back to store bought. Once we learned the difference:). Having a chance to deepen your knowledge about the food that literally helps keep you alive is one of the biggest reasons to be a part of a CSA.

Sadly, I believe in today’s world we have much to **un-learn**. Far too often we are told that cooking is drudgery, or it is hard and complicated. We are convinced we don’t have time, yet according to the statistics on hours spent in front of a screen, the average American watches or streams an average of 3 to 4 hours each day. How can we not squeak out a little bit of time in the week to make

nourishing food for ourselves? The food industry has done an excellent job of convincing us that time in the kitchen has little value and they are offering us “freedom” from all of that.

When you look at your CSA box this week, try to think of the simplest things you could make with one or two of the items. As an example, this afternoon I chopped up a small onion, sautéed it in a bit of butter, then added some chopped zucchini. I slow cooked the two while I worked on some other projects. When the zucchini was just beginning to brown I added enough water to cover the bottom of the pan, then let it slow cook further; repeating until the zucchini was really soft and the water evaporated. Seasoned it with a dash of our rosemary salt and served it with some freshly grated Parmigiana. Delicious and satisfying. That was my mid afternoon snack, but it is a fantastic side dish with a bit of protein on the side; add some fresh sliced tomatoes and you have a beautiful summer quick meal.

It is time we learn to ignore all the marketing and fads. Food doesn’t have to be complicated to be delicious, it only needs to be fresh, and hopefully have a little meaning in our lives. I would love to hear how you use items from the box in the simplest of ways; if you have a favorite let me know.

Last week at the Millennium dinner I had the fresh mint pasta with ridiculously delicious and I am sure complex sauces and toppings, really the exact opposite of what I was talking about on the front page. However, it was topped with purslane, uncooked, just sitting there as a delicious contrast to everything else in the dish and it was perfect. It was a way of using purslane that just would not have occurred to me. The dish was made with squares of pasta, fazzoletti, “Fazzoletto” means handkerchief. Many of us keep a box or two of lasagne noodles kicking around in the pantry hoping to some day have the time to make that dish, but did you know you can use those noodles to make other pastas, like fazzoletti? Here is a great [article](#) on how to do exactly that. In the meantime, for a relatively simple dish, slow roast your tomatoes, cherry tomatoes are delicious roasted and so are the full sized tomatoes. Cook up a bit of pasta, put some roasted tomatoes in a serving bowl, dollop a bit of fresh ricotta, top with a few squares of pasta, add a little cheese and use some of that fresh purslane for a perfect topper. Grate a little more Parm on top of it all, maybe a quick zest from a lemon, because that makes almost everything taste brighter.

Hydrating Cucumber Mango Smoothie

Recipe found on [NatureFreshFarms.com](#)
I am a smoothie lover, but I often get into a rut making the same thing over and over. Here is a nice reminder of adding some refreshing and hydrating cucumber to the mix!
1 Cucumber
2 cups Mango
2 cups Coconut Water
2 cups Ice
4 TB Honey
Juice from 1 Lime
Put all the ingredients into the blender and blend until smooth. Divide between 4 glasses and enjoy immediately.

Balsamic Roasted Eggplant & Arugula Sandwiches

Recipe by Alexandra Stafford Found on [Food52](#)
The original recipe calls for Japanese Eggplant, but we have globes, so you will do round slices. I would also replace arugula with Purslane and I would throw in a slice or two of fresh tomato, it is the season!
1 Eggplant
3 TB Balsamic Vinegar
3 TB Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Salt and freshly ground Black Pepper
Baguette or 4 Ciabatta Rolls
Softened Butter
1 Bunch Arugula, OR use the Purslane instead
Preheat oven to 425 F. Slice the eggplants into 1/4” thick rounds and lay on a parchment lined baking sheet. Mix balsamic vinegar and olive oil in a bowl. Brush mixture across top of each slice of eggplant, then sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast for 10 minutes. Turn slices over, brush with oil mixture, season with salt and pepper, and roast for another 8 minutes or so. Cool. Cut baguettes lengthwise in half and spread each half generously with softened butter. Place eggplant slices on the bread and top with arugula or purslane. Close and serve.

This Week's Box
 *Cucumbers
 *Tomatoes
 *Potatoes
 *Grapes
 *Eggplant
 *Lunchbox Peppers
 *Purslane
 Summer Squash
 Flowering Garlic Chive Chard
 Cherry Tomatoes
 * = Items in Box for 2

What to do with Flowering Garlic Chives? Try this recipe: Chinese Chive Flowers with Shrimp

Recipe found on [ThaiTable.com](#)
3/4 lb cut Garlic Chives with flower
1 1/2 TB Fish Sauce
1 clove chopped Garlic
1 lb Shrimp
1 tsp Sugar
Chop garlic. Cut the chives to 1 1/2 inch long. Peel and devain shrimp. Heat a wok or a pan on high heat. Add a tablespoon of oil and chopped garlic and stir. Add shrimp when the **garlic** starts to brown. Stir to get the shrimp somewhat cooked. It should start to get pinky but not all pink or cooked. Add the chives with flowers and stir to cook them. Add fish sauce and sugar. The flowers shouldn't take long to cook. You want the flowers to just cook, but not overcook and still retain their crunchiness. When the color turns bright green, it indicates that they are cooked. Turn off the heat and pour on a plate immediately. Serve over rice

I know I blather on and on about making tomato sauce, but you can roast any of the tomatoes that come in the box and enjoy them throughout the week. For such a purpose I would cut the butt end off the bigger tomatoes, or the little stems off the cherry tomatoes. I would spread them on a sheet pan, drizzle with some olive oil, salt and pepper, any seasoning you might like to add, rosemary, thyme, even sage and roast slow and low to let them caramelize a bit. For bigger tomatoes cut them in half on put on baking sheet cut side up. Roast at 300 or a bit lower depending on your oven, for about 2 hours. You can enjoy these as a side all week long.