



WHERE HAS THIS MONTH GONE?

I looked at the calendar last week, thinking there was another week in December and was shocked when I realized we were a week and a half away from Christmas. Honestly, this month has gone by so fast, I can't believe it.

Holidays are always a bit crazy, trying to figure out box schedules, packing up lots of orders for extras, but last week, our husband and wife team, Alicia and Jesus, both tested positive for COVID. Today, Jose and Miguel tested positive. Fortunately, Jesus and Alicia never got really sick and are back at work. I am hoping the same for Jose and Miguel. I suppose this week is probably a better time for this to happen since the box count is so low with the holidays, but I hate the thought that they might be really sick during Christmas. I am keeping my fingers crossed they will get over this quickly so they can enjoy a Feliz Navidad.

The rain came in Sunday afternoon. During a break yesterday evening, Beau and I took a muddy walk out on the farm. That boy of mine gets so fluffy running around in the cold, he loves it! As we headed out, the first thing I spied were several large bird nests up in our poplar trees. The nests aren't as visible when the trees are covered in leaves, so the size of them is not as impactful. In that first row of poplars there are at least 3 large nests, it's kind of thrilling seeing them there.



After the orchard, I came across beds of Asian Greens. This Yukina Savoy Komatsuna, pictured below, is just gorgeous. It is a different variety of Komatsuna from



what we had last year, it is much shorter. Those leaves are really dark green.

A few beds over there was clear evidence of the damage those wretched squirrels do to our young crops. This photo is looking down at an arrowhead cabbage. You can see how they have eaten away the entire top of the cabbage head. And in the rows next to these cabbages, the broccoli leaves almost look like skeletons. It is really disheartening seeing it, those squirrels cause so much damage. At least with the rains, they will go hibernate in their holes for the winter, so there is a little relief coming.

On the, "are you kidding me?" side of life, our chicken feed delivery came in last Thursday. The pump on the truck wouldn't work, so the driver couldn't get the pellets or the wheat up into our grain silos. The poor guy was out there for hours trying to get it going, he even tried climbing up with buckets. We get 3 tons of each, so he quickly realized that was ridiculous and definitely not the solution.

I called the guys in from the field so we could fill grain totes. Thank goodness farmers never throw anything away! But even with the boom low, the pump still wouldn't work and we ended up offloading 3 tons of wheat and 3 tons of pellets out of the little emergency door. We don't have that many grain totes, so we had to grab squash bins and dented cattle troughs, which are now sitting in the main yard covered in tarps to keep the rain out. It was one of those crazy things that made me very grateful for the even temperament of my crew. They just got in there and got it done, laughing all the while.



What To Cook This Week

I recently made a Butternut Bisque that was truly delicious! I used vegetable broth and you if want to keep this vegan you could use a good almond milk or even coconut cream. I always pre-roast butternuts and let it cool before peeling, cutting and seeding. I only roast it for about 20 to 30 minutes, depending on size. Popped it back into the oven to finish roasting. In the meantime, I sautéed 1 finely chopped onion in a good glug of oil. Once the onion was soft, I used my microplane and grated in 1 clove of garlic and a piece of ginger that was about 2". Stirred well, then added my spices. For a 1 butternut soup I used 1/8 tsp of red chili flakes and cardamom and 1/2 tsp cinnamon. Stirred well, and let those fragrances really come out. Then I added 4 cups of veggie broth and the butternut. Brought it to a simmer and let the squash get really soft. Using the immersion blender, I pureed the soup. I took about 1/2 cup of soup out, put it into a small bowl and added 2 tsp of White Miso to dissolve and mix it well, then added it back to the pot. Added two cups of cream, but maybe start with one and see how you like it. I found I like it with more cream, but you could certainly add more stock instead. Seasoned with salt and pepper to taste. You can push this through a fine mesh sieve for a really silky texture, but I am a little too lazy for that. Serve with some Rosemary Focaccia and you will have a great light dinner or afternoon lunch or a great start to a much bigger meal.

Rosemary Infused Citrus and Cranberry Holiday Cocktail

Recipe found on forkknifeswoon.com

A great way to use the Rosemary and citrus in the is week's share.

2 parts Vodka

1-2 parts Rosemary Simple Syrup (recipe below)

1 part fresh Tangerine/Mandarin

3 parts Cranberry juice (look for 100% juice, no sugar added)

Garnish Ice/Sugared Cranberries/Rosemary Sprigs/Citrus Slices

ROSEMARY SIMPLE SYRUP (MAKES 1 CUP)

1 cup Water

1 cup Granulated Sugar

2-3 large sprigs of fresh Rosemary

SUGARED CRANBERRIES

1/2 cup Water

1/2 cup granulated Sugar

2 cups fresh Cranberries

1-1/2 cups granulated Sugar, for rolling

Heat the water and sugar in a medium sauce pot over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the sugar is dissolved. Bring just to a boil, then remove from the heat, add the rosemary, and steep for up to an hour. Remove the rosemary before serving. Can be made in advance, and stored in the refrigerator for up to a week. **For the Cranberries:** heat the water and sugar in a medium sauce pot over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the sugar is dissolved. Bring just to a boil, then add the cranberries and stir until completely coated. Remove from the heat, and use a slotted spoon to transfer the cranberries to the baking rack to cool for about an hour. Try to keep the cranberries spaced apart so that they don't stick together, which will cause the sugar coating to clump. Add sugar to a shallow bowl or dish, and working in batches, roll the cranberries in sugar, coating com-

pletely, then transfer to a clean container to completely dry, up to an hour. Fill a highball glass with ice. Add the vodka, rosemary simple syrup (to taste) and fruit juices. Stir to combine. Optionally, for some sparkle and fizz, top with club soda. Garnish with sugared cranberries and/or a sprig of rosemary. Serve and enjoy the holidays!

Rotkraut

Recipe from NYT Cooking by Debbie Himmler adapted by Ligaya Mishan

Red Cabbage was always a part of our Christmas Eve meal, and I will be making a big pot of this on Sunday.

1 head Red Cabbage (about 2 pounds), halved, cored and thinly sliced

1 cup Burgundy (or other dry red wine)

1/2 cup light Brown Sugar

1 tsp Salt

Dash of Cayenne Pepper

Dash of ground Cloves

2 Bay Leaves

2 tart Apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced

1 TB Cornstarch

1/2 cup Apple Cider Vinegar

4 TB unsalted Butter, cubed

Combine cabbage, wine, brown sugar, salt,

cayenne, cloves, bay leaves and apples in a

large pot and bring to a simmer. Simmer, covered, for 20 minutes. In a small bowl, whisk

the cornstarch into the vinegar, then add to the

pot along with the butter; stir until butter is

melted. Simmer, uncovered, 20 more minutes,

or until most of the liquid has cooked off and

cabbage is very tender. Remove bay leaves be-

fore serving. This tastes best if it is made a day

or two ahead, and can be reheated in a covered

saucepan the day you plan to serve it.

Turnip Gratin

Recipe from NYT Cooking by Martha Rose Shulman

A fancy way to feature our turnips.

Butter or Olive Oil for the baking dish

1 Garlic clove, cut in half

2 lb Turnips, peeled and sliced in thin rounds

Salt and freshly ground pepper

4 oz Gruyere cheese, grated (about 1 cup tightly packed)

2 1/2 cups low-fat Milk (1 percent or 2 percent)

1 tsp fresh Thyme leaves, roughly chopped

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Butter or oil a 2-quart baking dish or gratin dish. Rub the sides and bottom with the cut clove

of garlic. Place the sliced turnips in a bowl and season gener-

ously with salt and pepper. Add half the cheese and the thyme

and toss together, then transfer to the gratin dish and pour on

the milk. It should just cover the turnips. Place in the oven and

bake 30 minutes. Push the turnips down into the milk with the

back of a large spoon. Sprinkle the remaining cheese over the

top and return to the oven. Bake another 40 to 50 minutes, until

all of the milk is absorbed, the turnips are soft and the dish is

nicely browned on top and around the edges.

This Week's Box

*Turnips

*Bok Choy

*Butternut

*Pomelo

*Red Kale

*Mandarins

*Red Cabbage

*Rosemary

Mustard OR Mizuna

Chard

Fennel

* = Items in Box for 2