



BLUE HOUSE FARM

CSA Newsletter

E Pluribus Farm

August 5, 2011

I am extremely fortunate to have a great team of people to work with on the farm. There are eight of us working on the farm right now. We all have different responsibilities and areas of expertise that make the farm function smoothly.

The field crew primarily focus on bringing in the harvest and spend a good 7-8 hours a day, five days a week, cutting, bunching, washing, weighing, bagging, and boxing. They spend the sixth day of the week and any spare hour or two after a harvest with planting, irrigating, and hoeing. Mario, Juan Carlos, Rogelio, and Leo together have over 70 years of agricultural experience. They have all grown up working in the fields in Mexico and now here on the coastside in Pescadero. When I watch them working in the fields, they make the work look so natural. Typically, when it comes to the harvest, I introduce them to a crop, show them the quality and bunch size or weight that I am looking for and step aside. They quickly find the most efficient and easiest way to bring the crop from the field, to the wash station, and into the cooler. And the vegetables always look amazing and I still can't figure out how they do it so quickly without damaging such delicate items. I am constantly learning from them and humbly reminded that after my dozen years of farming, I am definitely still a greenhorn.

The other half of the crew helps me primarily with the coordination of all of the various logistics that it takes to run such a diverse farm, staff the farmers markets, help with deliveries, and do as much field work as the remaining time allows.

JJ, who many of you have corresponded with, manages the CSA, does sales with our store accounts, and oversees the greenhouse work. Each week he puts the newsletter together (including the recipes, many of which are his creations), answers many e-mails and phone calls (which I am extremely thankful for,) sends out availability lists, fools around on Facebook, shuffles seedling flats around, and gets stinky with organic fertilizer in the greenhouses.

JJ's wife, Evelyn, manages the harvest, oversees the flower production, and is responsible for the orchard. She works closest with the field crew. Each morning she is the first one in the office at 6:50AM, when we put together the harvest list for the day. She then proceeds to the barn to greet the crew and go over the list. Throughout the day she shuttles the crew around to the various fields and constantly checks in with them to be sure that they have what they need to do their job well and answer any questions that may come up. She affectionately gives the crew a hard time when they miscount the number of bunches needed for an order or the quality is not just right. She also has a real talent for putting together stunning bouquets of flowers.

Anticipated Harvest

Savoy Cabbage
English Peas
Cheddar Cauliflower
Rainbow Chard
Summer Squash
Baby Bok Choy
Baby Red Batavian Lettuce
Red Radishes
Thyme
Basil
Strawberries

Hailed as the Queen of Cabbages, the most sweet and tender of all varieties, Savoy Cabbage has a recorded history reaching back to the 1500s in the Duchy of Savoy, what is today the border region of Italy and France. So distinct that it has it's own word in Italian ("verza" means Savoy Cabbage and nothing else), its low sulfur content results in a refreshing mildness whether raw or cooked, and its pliant crinkled leaves are the perfect candidate for stuffed cabbage rolls. It is tender enough to serve in a salad yet hearty enough to be the base upon which to build a Minestrone. Be aware, however, that due to its tender nature Savoy Cabbage does not keep as long as its cabbage brethren. High in vitamins, minerals and fiber like all crucifers, Savoy Cabbage is a uniquely potent source of the anticancer compound Sinigrin.

Tristan coordinates the add-ons for the CSA, helps me with tractor work and oversees the work at the new inland ranch. Each week Tristan takes the orders for bread, eggs, flowers, etc... and calls the baker, the beekeeper, the coffee roaster and the chicken farmers to convey the number needed for that week and coordinate delivery and pick-ups. He has also showed an affinity for tractor work and I have been teaching him how to use more of the different implements and gain confidence as a driver. It is not easy to drive those straight lines!

Thank you team!
Ryan

*The 2011 Blue House Farm Crew (l to r):
JJ, Ryan, Mario, Evelyn, Juan Carlos, Rogelio,
Tristan, Leo*



Verza Con Noci E Cipolle - **Savoy Cabbage with Walnuts & Onions**

1 Head Savoy Cabbage, about 2.5lbs
2 Medium Onions
1 C Walnuts
1/4 C Unsalted Butter (Half a Stick)
Olive Oil
4/5 C (200 ml) Broth or Stock
Salt & Pepper

Slice the cabbage off its core in quarters, then chop the quartered cabbage. Slice the onions very finely. Halve or quarter the walnuts.

In a large, heavy-bottomed skillet, melt the butter fortified with a glug or two of olive oil. When the butter has melted, add the onions and a pinch of salt, then turn the heat to high, stirring the onion till it becomes shiny gold. Add the cabbage along with a healthy sprinkling of salt and several grinds of black pepper. Stir, ensuring the cabbage is evenly coated, for another 5 minutes over high heat.

Add the walnuts and reduce the heat to medium-low, and cook for an additional 8 to 10 minutes, stirring regularly.

Add the broth and simmer for at least 15 minutes, until all the liquid has been absorbed. Adjust for seasoning, then serve with parmesan cheese, crusty Italian bread, and a dry white wine.

Two Methods for Preparing Bok Choy (That Aren't A Stir-Fry)

Roasted Bok Choy

1 bunch Bok Choy
Olive Oil
Salt & Pepper
Zest Of 1/2 a Lemon

Preheat oven to 400-50 degrees. Remove the stem from the bok choy and slice them in half lengthwise. Toss with a tablespoon or two of olive oil, enough to coat evenly, lemon zest, a sprinkle of salt & pepper. Arrange in single layer on parchment paper lined sheet pan, and roast 10-15 minutes, until leaves are just blackened.

Ginger-Braised Bok Choy

1 bunch Bok Choy
1 T Ginger & 1 T Garlic
1 C Broth, Stock or Water
1 T Sesame Oil
1 T Honey

Quarter the bok choy lengthwise, mince the garlic and ginger. Put oil in a skillet over medium-high heat, add the garlic and ginger and cook till fragrant, about 2 minutes, then add bok choy and cook 2 minutes more.

Add liquid & honey and cover. Simmer for 5 minutes. Remove lid and cook until liquid is reduced

Moroccan Chard Sauté

1 Bunch Rainbow Chard
1 Small Onion (or 1/2 a Medium)
2 Cloves Garlic
2T Pine Nuts (or Walnuts will suffice)
2T Raisins and/or Dates
1/4 tsp Cumin, Toasted & Ground
1/4 tsp Ground Cayenne Pepper
Juice of 1/2 a Lemon
Olive Oil
Salt & Pepper

Soak the raisins and/or dates in just enough water to cover. Remove the chard leaves from their stalks. Chop the stalks. Rinse the chard leaves then slice into long strips. Chop the onion and garlic. Toast the nuts.

Put onion and olive oil in skillet over medium high heat and cook until shiny, then add the garlic, cumin and cayenne, and cook until garlic turns a pale gold. Add the chard stems and a tablespoon of water, then reduce the heat and cover. Cook until the stalks start to soften, a few minutes, then add the rehydrated fruit (drained), salt and pepper, and a bit more water if the pan is dry. Replace lid and cook a couple more minutes, till a light sauce is created.

Add the chard greens, stir to coat, then replace lid and cook till tender, 7-10 minutes, stirring frequently. Toss with toasted nuts and lemon juice.