



SWALLOWTAIL FARM

All the Food that's Fit to Eat

Week of December 23rd, 2009

THIS WEEKS BASKET

Satsuma Tangerines

Grapefruit

Lemons

Lettuce Mix

Kale

Chards

Pac Choi

Tatsoi

Collards

Arugula

Sweet Potatoes

Herbs - Rosemary,
Cilantro, Dill
& Oregano

RECIPES:

Savory Kale And Sweet Potato Soup

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 onion, diced
3/4 cup diced carrot
4 cloves garlic, minced
3 cups chicken or vegetable stock/
broth
2 cups water
1 cup white wine
3 sweet potatoes, halved and sliced
1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh
rosemary

1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh sage
1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
1 16 oz. can cannellini beans (any
bean will work), rinsed and
drained
2 cups finely chopped kale leaves
1 small red chile pepper, seeded and
chopped fine
ground black pepper to taste

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat; cook and stir the onion until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the carrot and garlic, and cook for 5 minutes more. Pour in the broth, water, and white wine; stir in the potatoes, rosemary, sage, and thyme. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until the potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes. Add the beans, kale, chile pepper, and black pepper, and simmer, covered, for 30 more minutes.

Spicy Lemon-Cilantro Dressing

1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped
1 clove garlic
3/4 teaspoon minced fresh ginger root
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1/3 cup honey or raw sugar
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste
1/4 cup packed cilantro leaves
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil



Place the jalapeno pepper, garlic clove, and ginger into a food processor or blender; pulse until the jalapeno and garlic are finely chopped. Pour in the lemon juice, honey, balsamic vinegar, and salt, add the cilantro leaves; pulse a few times to blend. Turn the food processor or blender on, and slowly drizzle in the olive oil until incorporated into the dressing. Season to taste with salt before serving.

**"From December to March, there are for many of us three gardens:
the garden outdoors, the garden of pots and bowls in the house,
and the garden of the mind's eye."**

-Katherine S. White



I saw the strangest sight earlier today. I was inside the house with my little ones and heard a repetitive calling of some sort through the din, so I went outside to see what it was. I looked up across the road to the pasture on the other side and at first only saw one fellow calling cows. I could see right away he was asking them to move from one pasture through a gate into another, and it seemed reasonable enough, until I looked out into the pasture below the cows and saw two pickup trucks and a four-wheeler advancing slowly toward the herd, gathering up the strays and cutting off any would-be renegades from bolting back downhill. I realized suddenly that yes, these are what we used to call cowboys. I felt completely embarrassed on their behalf somehow, and felt bad for watching as they struggled to herd their charges through that gate. Why? Well, I think it has something to do with authenticity, or athleticism, or some subtle sense of cheating, even. When I think of cowboys, I think of rugged men on horses. And though the men this morning were all dressed of course in cowboy attire – spotless Stetsons and Levi’s – just the conspicuous substitution of a King-Cab F250 Lariat instead of a horse blew the whole gig and made it all feel, well, really goofy.

In general, farmers of the traditional sense have been gotten almost entirely off the hook for any of this sort of scrutiny, for who thinks of a farm without a tractor, or a farmer without a truck? And further, when we consider the Amish, aren’t they more often than not victimized by a wistful romanticism in our appreciation for their work, as if it were the stuff of dreams, and therefore not real? In short, we feel it is somehow unrealistic to be truly authentic. Of course, the real question lies in how each of us feel in our work, not what the perception of our work is to others. It is introspection, I believe that leads us onward treading a progressive path; a path of progress. Progress, as a word, has become mostly equated with technology at this point, but its more classical meaning is bound to a certain striving of spirit, which we all inevitably experience as humankind, I think.

So, in looking inward, I have recently found that I feel a deep longing for making this farm work as a whole organism, and not simply growing vegetables as best we can (which is truly all we’ve had the time to accomplish thus far). To me, this means being practical, and



I can say, and feel, these things because I feel them in my own work on the farm occasionally, though perhaps with some less pronounced quality of absurdity. A recurring occasion for this sense of shortcutting, or lack of authenticity, is the use of fossil fuels in the work of growing food, eg. using the tractor, or using our trucks as transport for seedling trays from the barn to the field, or digging a trench with our walk-behind tractor. Each of these activities seem eminently reasonable to all of us at this point in history, because it is so much easier, so much more convenient than to do any of the fuel-less alternatives, ie put our backs into it. To exert when we have the option not to seems not only silly, but even primitive at times to some folks nowadays. And yet, in cutting out our effort by supplanting it with the use of oil still just doesn’t feel quite right, and in some cases, feels just bad to me. Which brings up the question of authenticity again. Leaving out the question of sustainability, which some (me, at times) would say is kind of the catch-all litmus for whether something is appropriate, or ethical even, there is an even deeper question that nags at us in our activities these days, and that is the question of whether what we do is real, or not. Let’s consider cowboys, in their Stetson’s and Levi’s, and why they wore these things in the first place. The hats kept the sun off their necks, and the jeans gave them durable cloth for the long haul. Dirty, sweaty and well-worn, they have impressed in our romantic minds the enduring image of a hard-working, practical hero. So, are they really cowboys if they don’t even need a shower at night, and they never mount a horse? Well, there they are, farming cows. Maybe they’re not cowboys anymore. Maybe they’re cow farmers.

wholistic, and thorough, and giving each element of the farm more than just one function, and not doing any one thing just for its own sake. For example, the role of the chicken on the farm is three, or four, or even five-fold: as food itself, as layer of eggs (more food), as producer of manure, and therefore soil fertility (for growing more food), and cultivators of the soil, and even pest-control (eating bugs). The role of a tree is likewise multiple: shade, windbreak, fruit, shelter for birds and squirrels, forage, mulch, etc. Bees are pollinators of crops and flowers, and produce honey for themselves and us. Let me find my point here... While all of these elements of a farm can be seen (and even experienced) as kind of the trappings of a ‘real’ farm, there is a reason that they linger in pop culture as icons of an authentic farm entity. The real reason is that they are part of the whole, and without them, the whole is only partial, and not functioning to its full potential. And so, when Zach brought me honey from the bees at my house in town, and I felt a sudden jarring of my sense of wholeness, I knew right away that the bees belong there, but they belong here at the farm too, and with them, some cows to mow the grass, some chickens to spread their poop and scratch and lay eggs, and an overwhelming desire to make this farm a real farm - as real as the Skin Horse, as real as cowboys.

May this year’s end bring you authentic joy, true fullness, and real peace,

Noah Shitama
Swallowtail Farmer