



Community Cultivator



Newsletter of the Foggy River Farm CSA, Week 4

Homer and Cassie

Those of you who were members of Foggy River Farm last year will remember our puppy Homer. For those of you who haven't met him -- and watched him grow from a wiggly 35-pound puppy to the 110-pound (sweet and cuddly) beast he is today -- we thought we'd introduce two very important animals on our farm.



Homer and his new companion, Cassie, are Anatolian Shepherds. They're a breed of Livestock Guard Dog that has been guarding sheep and goats for thousands of years. They originally lived in the high plains of Turkey, where they would be left in the wilderness with a flock of sheep for several months at a time. These Anatolian Shepherds were such hardworking, independent animals that they would guard their ewes and lambs (which would of course make a tasty snack for a hungry dog) and find their own food by hunting birds and rodents instead.

Today, Anatolian Shepherds are one of the more rare breeds of dog working in the United States. Great Pyrenees, with their big fluffy white coats, are much more common, but we chose Anatolians because their smooth coats are more suited to our hot summers and foxtail-filled grasses. They're also known for their ability to be both pet and guardian,

which means that they can be trusted to be kind to farm visitors (but still fierce to visiting coyotes).

We made the decision to bring Homer to our farm right after we lost two sheep to a marauding pack of coyotes. He immediately settled into life with the flock, but after a few months it became clear that he needed more companionship than just sheep. He kept escaping and ending up at the neighbor's! They had a dog he really enjoyed visiting, so we brought him a friend of his own--Cassie. He hasn't escaped since, and he and Cassie (and the goats and sheep) are best of friends.

In other news this week, we have officially run into one of our biggest fears on the farm--and survived to tell the tale! This "January" has been so cold that even our cold-weather crops haven't been growing at their usual rate. Normally we would have broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, onions and turnips by now, but our season is off to a slow start.

Anyway, since starting the CSA three years ago we have always been wary of the dreaded "gap week" -- a week when early crops were on their way out, but later crops had not yet come in. Thanks to the weather, a mild version of the gap week happened this week for the first time, but luckily some farmer friends came to the rescue. We were able to purchase organic, chemical-free produce from local farmers: oranges from Windsor resident Gary Blasi, and delicious onions from Bernier farms in Dry Creek Valley. We know and trust these growers, and are very grateful that they were able to provide produce for our CSA.

We're also sharing with you some of the fruits of last year's labors -- blackberry jam from last year's berry crop and eggs from our stalwart hens. Hopefully these will tide you over as we await our broccoli, carrots, and other spring delights.

Your Foggy Farmers,
Emmett & Lynda
Craig & Emma

What's In Your Box:

- **Kale (Lacinato/Tuscan/Dino or Red Russian)** *Kale disappears when thrown into a soup or stir fry, can be chopped thinly into a raw kale salad, roasted to make kale chips (see week 2 recipe), and also makes a nice pesto when de-ribbed and blended with walnuts, garlic and parmesan. (Recipe included.)*
- **Chard (Bright Lights)** *This colorful mix of swiss chard varieties can be fixed in a variety of ways. The simplest way is to shred it finely (perpendicular to the stalk), sauté some garlic in oil, and then quickly sauté the chard with some lemon juice and salt and pepper until it is just soft. Put a lid on part way through to steam the leaves and soften them into a tender delight!*
- **Head Lettuce (Red Cross / Grandpa Admirers / Sylvesta)** *More head lettuce for fresh, crisp salads. Some of these heads may be on the bitter side, which can easily be cut with a strong dressing...say, a honey vinaigrette.*
- **Spinach (Space / Magenta Mountain Orach)** *Yet again we get to enjoy these spring leaves, packed with nutrients. They will be fewer and farther between during the summer, so savor them while they last. The smaller, more tender leaves are delicious in a fresh salad, and larger leaves are excellent wilted into a pasta, soup or casserole or steamed with some lemon juice or other seasonings. (The other night we made a pesto pasta and added in a couple large handfuls of finely chopped strips of spinach and orach, letting them wilt in the heat of the pasta. Very tasty!) (Recipe included.)*
- **Green Garlic** *Green garlic can be chopped from the base (just cut the roots off, and peel off the dry outer layers) to the tip of the leaves. You'll want to make use of the whole length of the stalk. A mild garlic flavor for any dish.*
- **Fresh herb (Sorrel)** *This tangy leaf is a "sweet-n-sour" treat. It can be shredded and added to a fresh salad for a unique tang, or chopped and mixed in with some steamed swiss chard. (Recipe included.)*
- **Red Onions (from Bernier Farms)** *We've brought in a little produce from our friends at Bernier Farms in Alexander Valley. Zureal and his mom Yael can be found each week at the Healdsburg and Santa Rosa farmers markets. We hope you enjoy these hefty onions. (Recipe included.)*
- **Oranges (from Blasi Ranch)** *Some local citrus from our friend Gary Blasi, who also sells at the Healdsburg (and Windsor) farmers market. Gary wants you all to know that his orange tree is never sprayed, so the peels are perfect for zesting. (Recipe included.)*
- **½ dozen eggs OR Blackberry Jam** *Because the cool and rainy May/June has meant mostly greens for another week, we're serving up a little extra farm treat. You can choose between 6 eggs from our free-range hens and a jar of blackberry jam from last year's summer harvest.*

Foggy River Recipes

Spinach, Sorrel, and Orange Pesto

This recipe comes from the Better Homes & Gardens recipe collection. I have to admit, we haven't tried this one yet, but it's intriguing isn't it? We will definitely be serving it up sometime very soon.

Ingredients

¼ cup slivered almonds, toasted
1 ½ cups loosely packed fresh **spinach** leaves
1 ½ cups loosely packed fresh **sorrel**, arugula, or watercress leaves
1/3 cup olive oil
1/3 cup grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
½ teaspoon finely shredded **orange peel**
3 tablespoons **orange juice**
¼ teaspoon ground red pepper
1/8 teaspoon salt

Directions

1. Place almonds in a food processor bowl or blender container. Cover and process or blend the almonds until finely chopped. Add the spinach and sorrel, arugula or watercress; cover. With the machine running, gradually add the oil in a thin, steady stream, processing until the mixture is combined and slightly chunky. Add Parmesan or Romano cheese, orange peel, orange juice, ground red pepper, and salt. Cover and process or blend just until combined.
2. To store, divide pesto into 1/4-cup portions and place in airtight containers. Store in the refrigerator for up to 1 week. To serve, bring pesto to room temperature. Makes 3/4 cup.

Raw Kale Salad with Orange

We love using Lacinato Kale (aka Dinosaur Kale) in raw salads. Here's a simple yet delicious salad idea. You can make many variations on this them. Some people call this "massaged kale salad."

Ingredients:

2 bunches of **kale**, stems removed
2 **oranges**, sectioned
1 small **red onion**, halved, and then shaved thin
1/2 cup olive oil

1/4 cup lemon juice
2 tbsp salt
1/4 cup apple cider vinegar

Wash the kale thoroughly, place it in a large bowl, then add apple cider vinegar, and cover the leaves with water. Allow to soak for 10 minutes. Then rinse thoroughly with fresh water. Spin the leaves dry.

Return to bowl, drizzle with 1/2 cup olive oil, then sprinkle on the salt. Use your hands to rub the olive oil and salt into all the crevices of the kale leaves. Allow to rest 10 minutes.

De-rib the kale (i.e. remove the tough, central spine.) You can now either rip the kale into large pieces, or very finely slice the kale leaves cross-wise (so they end up in thin strips several inches long.)

You can shave your onion and section the oranges at this time. Chop the orange sections into small cubes. Next, add the lemon juice, orange bits, and shaved onions. Toss well and serve. Keep it cold and eat it all within 2 days.

Pasta with Kale and Walnut pesto

Still not sure what to do with that kale? This kale pesto recipe will turn you into a fan. Recipe adapted from Four Seasons Pasta by Janet Fletcher.

Ingredients

1/2 pound **Lacinato Kale**, central ribs removed
2 large cloves garlic
1/2 cup walnuts, toasted
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil (or part light olive oil, part virgin)
1/3 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese
Salt
1 pound penne pasta (or pasta of your choice)
Other veggies (optional... steamed chard? Wilted spinach? Shaved red onions?)

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. After de-ribbing the kale (removing the central stalk) add the kale to the boiling water, pushing it down into the water with tongs, and cook 1-3 minutes until it is soft and tender. Transfer to a sieve with the tongs and cool quickly under cold running water. (Keep the cooking water at a boil.) Drain the kale, then squeeze gently to remove excess water.

Put the kale in a food processor with the garlic and walnuts and process until nearly smooth. With the machine running, add the olive oil gradually until the pesto is creamy; it doesn't need to be completely smooth. Transfer the pesto to a bowl and stir in the cheese, then season generously with salt.

(I like to adding some other veggies to the pasta. If you choose to add broccoli or something else, you can cook the veggies quickly in the same boiling water, before

cooking the pasta.) Add the pasta to the boiling water and cook until al dente. Just before the pasta is done, whisk a little of the hot pasta water into the pesto to make a thin sauce.

Set aside 1 cup of the pasta water, then drain the pasta and return it to the warm pot. Add as much of the pesto as you need to coat the pasta, then toss well, moistening with some of the reserved pasta water if needed. Divide among warm bowls and top each portion with a little additional cheese. Enjoy!