



Community Cultivator

Newsletter of the Foggy River Farm CSA, Week 4



The Turkey Project

Before we get on to the exciting subject of today's newsletter, we'd like to take a moment to thank our amazing CSA field team. Thanks to hardworking CSA members—during two consecutive Sunday sessions—we have saved a (very) weedy row of carrots, tended to two rows of chard and kale, planted another row of chard and kale, and pruned/staked/tied four long rows of heirloom tomatoes!

And now on to the news! In addition to our growing human baby and our twin goat kids, Foggy River Farm is currently home to about 15 baby turkeys, with 15 more set to arrive this week. Yes, this crazy project belongs to the same person who had the crazy idea of keeping chickens for eggs, goats for milk, and alpacas for—well, admittedly there's no earthly reason for keeping the alpacas except that they were given to us for free. And they're kind of cute, in a slightly alien sort of way. (Hint: in case you haven't guessed, the person with these ideas was not Emmett.)

Why turkeys? First of all, they're delicious. And the idea of homegrown turkey for the winter holidays is hard to resist. But turkeys also have some other benefits: they don't scratch the ground like chickens do, so as they forage the hillside by our house, they won't cause erosion. Believe it or not, turkeys have fabulous personalities (very friendly and curious), and they also have beautiful feathers if we ever have time to become the sort of crafty people who make cute things out of feathers.

We ordered our turkeys from Sandhill Preservation Center, a small, family-run hatchery in Iowa that is dedicated to preserving heritage breeds of turkeys, chickens, ducks, geese, and guineas. It's also a no-kill hatchery (or, as we see it, a you-kill hatchery; after all, turkeys are for eating!) meaning they sell all of their chicks as "straight run" -- i.e., males and females mixed together. You can't just order females like you can at the larger hatcheries, which often kill the excess male chicks in rather nauseating ways. Unfortunately, baby heritage turkeys from a no-kill family farm aren't cheap. For a tiny fragile turkey poult that might die at any moment, we paid \$10 or \$12, depending on the rarity of the breed. (It's a long ways from the free Butterball at Safeway.)

Since we're talking turkey, we thought it might be fun to share a few myths and interesting facts about the birds:

- 1) Turkeys drown in the rain. False! This myth may have stemmed from the fact that baby turkeys (just like baby chickens and many other baby birds) will die in the rain because they are covered in down, and not feathers.
- 2) Turkeys are incredibly stupid. In my humble opinion, this is another myth, but one with a basis in reality. In a natural situation, baby turkeys are raised by the mama turkey,

just like human kids are. Baby turkeys appear to be stupid because they don't know how or what to eat on their own. They can easily die by ingesting their bedding of pine shavings rather than the food they're supposed to eat. But by that logic, a human toddler is also stupid because he doesn't know how to make his own grilled cheese sandwich (and he might also easily swallow something he's not supposed to). Turkeys do best when raised by their mama—but if no mama is present, it's helpful to put baby chickens in with them (since chickens have strong eating instincts and can show the turkeys what to do).

3) Turkeys cannot reproduce on their own. Depressingly, this is actually true for the common commercial breeds of turkey -- the broad breasted white, which makes up literally 99.9% of the turkeys raised and sold in the United States. It's also true of the slightly less popular broad breasted bronze. Why is this? The turkeys' oversized breasts are literally too large for them to get the job done -- the muscle gets in the way of the actual act of copulating. However, our heritage turkeys will have a more natural figure. They will be able to mate naturally, and even rear their own young. Note: white turkeys are popular commercially because they dress out more cleanly -- a tiny white proto-feather beneath the skin will go unnoticed, whereas a dark colored feather or feather shaft will be more obvious to a customer.

So there you have it. We currently have Wishard bronze (a true-breeding bronze strain), Jersey Buffs, Auburn, Narragansett and Spanish Black turkeys scurrying all over a brooder in the barn... with more set to arrive soon!

Your Foggy Farmers,
Lynda and Emmett

PS -- We often have people asking us who wrote the week's newsletter. Emmett typically writes the recipes and veggie list, and we trade off on the introduction. We decided to implement a not-so-secret system starting this week: if Lynda writes it, we'll sign the letter "Lynda and Emmett"... if Emmett writes it, we'll sign it "Emmett and Lynda." Sneaky, no?

What's In Your Box:

- **Summer Squash (various)** Yes, it's here! *One of those classic summer vegetables, summer squash signal the transition into the hot season. We planted our first planting nice and early at the beginning of April, so they're primed and ready to grow! Throw these colorful fruits on the grill, add to pasta sauce, make zucchini bread...the possibilities are endless. (Recipes included.)*
- **Head Lettuce (New Red Fire / Bergam's Green / Sylvesta / Speckled / Red Cross)** *Some more head lettuce for spring salad. This lettuce is great with a light dressing and some crumbled goat cheese on top. We recently discovered a nice change of pace from the usual olive-oil-and-balsamic salad dressing...try sesame oil with rice vinegar as a dressing—delicious!*
- **Green Garlic** *Green garlic can be chopped from the base (just cut the roots off) to the tip of the leaves. A mild garlic flavor for any dish.*
- **Fava Beans** *This week you'll get about 1.5 pounds of favas—these may be the last fava beans of the spring. You might find these beans a bit more mature—and therefore starchier—than last weeks, meaning they'll be best cooked a little longer. Now a reminder about the preparation... To prepare the beans, you can go with the blanching method: First, peel the beans from the pod (you can pull the stem and “unzip” it like a zipper); next, cook them for one minute in salted boiling water; then shock them in cold water and slip the outer skins off. Add them to succotash, pasta or salads, or cook them with garlic and mash on top of bread for crostini. OR—if you'd like to try an alternate method, you can roast the entire pods with oil and salt for about 25 minutes in a 400 degree oven.*
- **Broccoli (Arcadia)** *This spring had an early hot spell, which threw off the broccoli's natural rhythms and resulted in some early-to-mature, slightly funny looking broccoli. If your broccoli looks unusual, it reflects its unconventional growing conditions and it should taste just fine. You can steam it and lightly salt if you like to go simple, or combine with some summer squash and garlic (and Fava beans?) for a light Pasta Primavera.*
- **Dry Garlic** *Great for seasoning any dish. This is from our earliest maturing garlic—the first to “dry-down” this year.*

Foggy River Recipes

Stuffed Squash

A recipe from “160 Fresh and Healthy Vegetarian Recipes” by Valerie Ferguson. She says the “squash have a sweet, subtle flavor that contrasts well with black olives and sun-dried tomatoes. The rice adds substance and texture.”

4 patty-pans or other stuff-able squash
2 cups cooked long grain rice (brown or white) Note: quinoa is an alternate option.
4 pieces sun-dried tomatoes, in oil, drained and chopped, plus 2 T oil from the jar.
½ cup pitted black olives, chopped
1 T chopped fresh basil leaves, plus fresh basil sprigs, to garnish (can substitute with oregano or other fresh herbs.)
4 T soft goat's cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Trim away the base of the squash (if necessary, to stabilize), slice off the top, scoop out the insides with a spoon to make room for filling. Depending on the texture of the squash, you may need to use a knife to cut out some of the insides. Take care to leave enough squash wall so it will be sturdy in the oven and not collapse.

Mix together the rice, sun-dried tomatoes, olives, basil and cheese in a bowl. Stir in half the oil from the jar. If you would like you can also chop the squash flesh that you scooped out into small bits and add it in to the rice mixture.

Use a little of the remaining oil to grease a shallow ovenproof dish that is just large enough to hold the squash side by side. Divide the rice mixture among the squash and place them in the dish. Drizzle any remaining oil over.

Cover with foil and bake for 45-50 minutes, until tender. Garnish with basil sprigs.

Pasta Primavera

Here is some guidance for turning some of this week's veggies into a spring pasta dish. Feel free to diverge from the recipe, adding any flavors you like or using more or less of any of the veggies.

Ingredients

Cooked Penne pasta, or other pasta of your choice.
1 cup Broccoli & Broccoli Stalk, chopped and lightly steamed
1-2 medium summer squash
1/2 cup Fava beans, shelled and cooked
(see shelling/cooking instructions in “What's in your box?” section)
1-2 stalks Green Garlic, chopped into circles all the way up the stalk
(or dry garlic)
Olive oil

Parmesan cheese, grated (optional)
Salt & Pepper to taste

Saute garlic over medium heat. When soft, add squash and cook until squash softens.

Combine garlic, squash, cooked fava beans, and steamed broccoli in a bowl. At this point you can toss with some olive oil and salt and pepper, then add to the pasta and mix. If you're feeling more creative and want something a little more interesting, you can mix a little marinade of olive oil, vinegar, plus a little honey and salt and pepper; then toss the veggies with the marinade and let them sit for 10-20 minutes. Finally combine with the pasta and top with cheese as you like.