

RED DOG FARM



In your share this week:

Winter Squash (Sweet Dumpling or Delicata)

Leeks

Red Beets

Collards (small shares only)

Cress (large shares only)

It's starting to feel like spring, already! Several clues are the warm, erratic weather, the emergence of the fresh, tender garlic leaves, and the lengthening days. I can feel my energy level increase with each day and find myself feeling very excited and optimistic about this season. In just a couple weeks we'll start seeding our first crops; onions and leeks.

Between now and then we have the crucial job of putting up the propagation greenhouse. The kit is on its way and we hope to have the structure up by the following weekend. For those of you who have been with me through the greenhouse disaster of 2009, rest assured that these greenhouses will be securely attached to the earth with concrete in many places and have been tested in areas with 165 miles per hour of wind. Luckily, it doesn't get that windy here!

I am so excited to have greenhouses on the farm. The past two years I have been renting a greenhouse a couple miles down the road. While this was very helpful at the time, it quickly became a huge chore to drive back and forth to the greenhouse to open and close doors and water sometimes four times a day. What a relief to have everything on the farm where it won't get neglected or become an onerous chore.

These days I've been inside a lot, working to get taxes together, plan the crop production, having meetings with buyers, and ordering seeds. Although this may sound like drudgery to some, it's actually my favorite time of year, especially for the short period of time it lasts. I find myself having so much hope for the potential of this season. I dream of successful crops, a happy and efficient crew, bumper sales, weeded fields, and general agricultural bliss. It's also just enjoyable to spend time inside and use my brain more than my body.

RECIPES

Grapefruit Cress Salad

1/2 lb. Cress leaves, chopped in half
 2 grapefruit
 4 Tbs. minced onions or shallots
 1 cup fresh goat cheese or fromage blanc
 5 Tbs. olive oil

Cut the grapefruit in half. Using a small spoon, scoop out the grapefruit segments, leaving the membrane. Squeeze the grapefruit half to get remaining juice. Toss all ingredients together and serve.

Collard Salad

1 bunch Collards

1/2 lb. Beets
1 cup hemp seeds, pine nuts or sunflower seeds

Dressing:

1/3 cup well-stirred tahini
1/3 cup water
1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 garlic cloves, minced
3/4 teaspoon salt

Stack the collards on top of each other, and then roll up like a cigar. Slice as thinly as possible. Grate the beets (no need to peel them). Combine collards, beets and seeds. In a small bowl combine all the dressing ingredients. Stir well. Dress the salad and enjoy!

Kelley's Quinoa and Beets

Kelley, our phenomenal winter volunteer, inspired me with her simple, delicious beet recipe.

2 cups quinoa
4 cups water
as many Beets as you like, chopped, not peeled
Balsamic vinegar
Blue cheese (or parmesan is good, too)

In a rice maker, if you have one, put in the quinoa, water and chopped beets. Turn it on and walk away until it's done. When it's all cooked, season with balsamic vinegar and cheese.

Leek Tart

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- 5 medium Leeks
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 1/2 tsp. salt plus more to taste
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup half-and-half or cream
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tart crust (pie crust works as well)
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup freshly shredded cheese - gruyere, parmesan, or similar

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven 375. Clean leeks, remove root end and dark green leaves, halve lengthwise, and cut into thin slices.
2. Melt butter in a large frying pan or sauté pan over medium heat. Add leeks and sprinkle with salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until leeks are very tender, about 10 minutes.
3. Add half-and-half or cream. Reduce heat to low and let cook to blend flavors and reduce liquid, about 5 minutes. Take off heat and stir in pepper. Taste and add more salt and pepper to taste, if you like.
4. Lay crust in a 9-inch round tart pan (or similar). Add leek mixture and spread in an even layer. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake until bubbly and golden, about 35 minutes.
5. Let sit 5 to 10 minutes before cutting. Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature.