



CSA News

August 30-September 5, 2021

CSA Week 17

Volume 18, No. 29



Farm Share Storage & Use Tips:

- Beets, carrots and hakurei turnips: Store in a plastic bag in the fridge.
- Celery: Recut the ends and stand up in a jar of water in the fridge. It should keep for up to two weeks.
- Peppers, zucchini and summer squash: Store unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in your fridge's vegetable bin.
- Leeks: Wrap in a slightly damp paper towel inside a plastic bag; it doesn't need to be sealed airtight.
- Microgreens: Keep microgreens in the fridge in their plastic container. Do not wash until you're ready to use them.
- Okra: Keep okra in a paper bag in the fridge. It will store for a week. A small bit of black streaking is normal. Wash and cut just before use.
- Onions: Cippolini are specialty Italian onions. Candy are sweet yellow. Also find red, yellow and white. Onions are cured, so store on the countertop or pantry.
- Potatoes: These are new potatoes, dug fresh and meant to be refrigerated.
- Tomatoes: Load up on your tomatoes this week, as we head out of peak season! Store tomatoes at room temperature. Ripen in a paper bag. You may receive tomatoes at varying degrees of ripeness so you can enjoy them all week.

Turkey Tales

The turkey's rich history is well deserved, considering how majestic these birds are. As turkey production began to be concentrated and industrialized, someone mistook their cautious curiosity for stupidity and labeled them as dumb. Spend a few hours with them out here on the farm, and you'll realize nothing could be further from the truth. It's too bad the quest to produce cheap food in this country has tarnished the reputation of this bird. Rearing these animals at Elmwood Stock Farm is not only rewarding but a joy.

We offer two types of organic, pasture-raised turkeys: heritage breed and broad-breasted. The Broad-Breasted Bronze turkeys have full, plump white-meat breasts many of us are accustomed to. These look like the turkeys you find at the grocery store, but the similarities stop there, as they're raised on our rotational-pasture system and fed organic, non-GMO grains. The heritage turkeys are barely domesticated cousins of the wild turkeys you see along back roads and hiking trails. These have a more equal white-meat to dark-meat ratio, and the meat overall has a deeper, richer flavor and texture.

Turkeys' Upbringing

Young turkeys—called poults—are fragile. We modified the old tobacco barn stripping room into a brooding facility for them and our broiler chickens. The brooder barn has a concrete floor, insulated walls and ceiling, heat, cooling fans and running water. The poults must be kept at 95 degrees F for a couple of weeks after hatching. Gradually the temperature is backed off over several weeks, until the ambient temperature is suitable, especially at night. They graduate to the “nursery,” room which is an open pen where they can run and fly a bit and learn that they are birds. As they become juveniles, we move them to the pastures, where they have outdoor shade-house enclosures with an electric-netting perimeter fence to keep out predators and allow them plenty of space to run and jump and to fly a bit, as they please.

Raising each of these breeds of turkeys on pasture has its challenges, with all that Mother Nature tends to throw at us, but the quality of the meat is well worth the effort. We move the turkeys to fresh pasture several times per week, affording the birds a fresh batch of insects to devour and tender, young plant leaves to round out their organic grain-based diet. The relatively yellow fat we see in the birds is an indicator of the beta carotene they receive from eating green and growing plant material, which is good for us, as well.

We care for the broad-breasted turkeys for 16 to 18 weeks and the heritage turkeys for 24 to 30 weeks, or actually year-round, if you count the breeding flock.

Heritage Turkeys

In our heritage turkey breeding flock, you'll find some Bourbon Reds but mostly Narragansetts, with a few Gray Slates and White Royal Palms. These turkey breeds used to be the standard of what a Thanksgiving turkey should look like, yet they fell from favor as industrial breeding programs developed large-breasted strains with a greater portion of lighter meat. The heritage turkey breeds became very rare indeed, with just a few hundred breeding females in the country. The Livestock Conservancy maintained them on numerous small farms, almost like zoo animals. We were not interested in maintaining them as a novelty, but us and other market farmers like us said that if you let us eat them, we will raise lots of them. We started with about 12 the first year, and now we raise several hundred.

Generally we like to have about 30 hens (females) and five to six toms (males) in the breeding flock. They are seasonal egg layers, so we gather eggs from mid-March through June, incubate them, and let them get their start in the brooder before moving them to pasture.

Turkey as a Holiday Meal

The price you pay to acquire one of these beauties is calculated based on the amount of feed they eat and how much time it has taken us to care for them. The cost of processing each turkey at our abattoir, who handles each one by hand and with care, is more than what the supermarkets charge for a whole bird (but the supermarkets are using the turkeys as loss leaders to get people in the door to buy canned sweet potatoes and marshmallows to top them).

We are proud to have learned how to raise these poultry on prime bluegrass pastures in a manner that respects their heritage. We tend to their every need from the time they hatch and come into our care. Whichever breed you choose to share with your friends and family this season, you can eat in peace knowing just how much respect was given to them. —*Mac Stone*

TURKEY PREORDERS ARE NOW OPEN!

Visit ElmwoodStockFarm.com/Turkeys to learn more about how these animals are raised in our regenerative-agriculture system, to watch a short video about the turkeys, and to place your holiday order.

Recipes

Shredded Beef Ragu

Adapted from Clean Foodie Cravings

4 cloves garlic	1/4 lb. mushrooms, diced
1 lb. tomatoes, quartered	1 T. tomato paste
1½ lb. beef short ribs	1/4 c. beef or chicken broth
salt & pepper, to taste	1 tsp. fish sauce
2 T. avocado or olive oil	1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes
1 onion, diced	

Put garlic and tomatoes in a food processor, and pulse until puréed.

Season short ribs with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven or heavy pot over high. Add short ribs. Lower heat to medium-high. Sear on all sides, 3 to 5 minutes per side. Remove ribs and set aside.

To the pot, add onion and mushrooms. Sauté until onions are tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper, add tomato paste, and sauté for a couple of minutes. Add broth and allow to reduce a bit. Pour in tomato-garlic mixture, fish sauce and red pepper flakes. Stir. Return ribs to the sauce, lower the heat, cover, and simmer for 1 hour, or until ribs are fall-apart tender. Remove ribs, shred and return to the sauce. Taste, and season with more salt, if necessary. Continue to simmer uncovered for about 15 minutes to thicken the sauce.

Serve atop zucchini noodles.

Simple Roast Shishito Peppers

Adapted from The Kitchn

1 c. plain Greek yogurt	salt & pepper, to taste
1/4 c. chopped fresh herbs	1 pint shishito peppers
1 tsp. sherry vinegar	1 T. olive or grapeseed oil
1 tsp. fresh lemon juice	coarse salt

Combine first five ingredients to make a dipping sauce.

Drizzle peppers with oil and a healthy sprinkle of salt. Toss to coat.

Place an oven-safe skillet under the broiler. When hot enough that a flick of water evaporates, add peppers.

Cook without moving the peppers for a few minutes so they char, then stir. Continue stirring every minute or two until peppers are blistered and darkened, 5 to 6 minutes.

Transfer to a plate and sprinkle with extra salt.