

CILANTRO LIME COLE SLAW

Adapted from wonkywonderful.com

1 small head green cabbage, core removed, shredded	3 Tbsp olive or avocado oil
1 bunch cilantro, stems removed, chopped	juice of 2 limes
2 jalapenos, seeds removed, finely chopped	salt and pepper
	small pinch sugar (optional)

1. Combine cabbage, cilantro and jalapeno.
2. Mix oil, lime juice, salt and pepper. Pour mixture over cabbage.
3. Toss until slaw is evenly coated with dressing.
4. Set aside at least 15 minutes before serving.

ZUCCHINI TURKEY BURGERS

Adapted from hauteandhealthyliving.com

1 lb ground turkey	2 Tbsp parsley, finely chopped
1 small zucchini, grated	1/4 tsp red pepper flakes
1/2 tsp lemon zest	1/2 tsp onion powder
2 garlic cloves, minced	1/2 tsp salt
2 green onions, finely chopped	freshly ground pepper

1. Preheat grill to medium-high.
2. Add all ingredients for burgers to a medium sized bowl and mix until combined. Using your hands, form the mixture into four evenly sized patties.
3. Ease the burger patties onto the grill and do not move them for 6 minutes, leaving the cover of the grill open.
4. After 6 minutes, flip the burgers and let them cook 8-10 minutes or until the burgers release from the grill and the interior temperature of the thickest part of the burgers reaches 165 degrees F.
5. Transfer the burgers to a clean plate.
6. Garnish burgers with desired toppings and/or buns and serve.



Summer CSA News



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Leafy Greens: Store leafy greens in the fridge in a perforated plastic bag. If you chop and wash ahead of time, spin the leaves dry before putting back in the bag with a dry paper towel to absorb moisture. Refresh by plunging them in ice water 15-20 minutes.

Beans: Store unwashed beans in a perforated plastic bag in the veggie bin of your fridge for up to 1 week. Rejuvenate limp beans by soaking them in ice water for 30 minutes.

Carrots, Turnips, Beets, Radishes: Store in a bag, or other container in the coldest crisper bin of your fridge. If your root vegetables still have greens attached, cut them off. Keep the greens refrigerated in a closed plastic bag. The roots should last for weeks.

Zucchini: All summer squash and zucchini can be used interchangeably. Store unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable bin of your fridge. They should keep for more than a week.

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.

Handling the Heat

We find ourselves under a series of heat domes these past few weeks, with little rain to speak of—only a half-inch in almost a month. Frankly, I’m surprised the fields are as green as they are. We know the dry time is coming. We are prepared with pumps and hoses, and now is the time to endure. While it’s supposed to be hot in June/July/August, the key is water. The regenerative farming systems we employ are grounded in diversity, which brings resilience. The more diverse an ecosystem is, the stronger she is, a cornerstone of the law of nature.

Seems that every summer there will be an extended dry spell, hopefully not all summer. One year in the 1980s, it never rained until the fourth of July, then rained everyday after that. Too dry to plant, then too wet, literally overnight. The next year, it was the exact opposite. One year, it just plain never rained. The devastating hurricanes Katrina and Rita were the lifeblood of moisture for farmers in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. We have yet to witness the summer of ’24, but it’s starting off dry. The only reason pastures are still green is because we got four to five inches of rain the week prior to the first day of summer. Every rain could be the last.

Soil moisture, brimming with nutrients, is taken up by the roots of plants and translocated to the leaves. The nutrients feed the photosynthesis process to grow more leaves, and/or fruits, and/or more roots depending on what the hormones are calling for. The water is used to keep the leaves cool, and the machinery greased—plant sweat if you will. The by-products of all this are awesome tasting foods and high humidity oxygen being released into the air, transpiration, which you learn about in Agronomy 101. The bigger the plant, the more leaves per acre, and the more moisture that -gets cycled back to make more rain. Plants and people behave the same: the hotter it is, the more water is required to remain healthy.

The deep rich soils of the Inner Bluegrass hold moisture in the worm tunnels, micro-nooks and -crannies, and the organic matter itself acts as a sponge. The gazillions of microbes are a moisture sink in and of themselves. Through our regenerative farming practices, we have added organic matter (carbon sequestration) and improved the diversity and density of the soil food web to gain some buffering capacity during dry spells. As the ground dries out, the microbial populations go dormant and visible bugs and ants and worms go into a state of hibernation. By then the plants will be all wilted anyway.

But we are not there, yet. John has a trickle irrigation system set up for most of the true summer crops like tomatoes, peppers, squash, etc. The water from the North Fork of Elkhorn Creek seeps into the soil from a tube laid along the plants in the row. The fields are laid out in zones to allow for a thorough soaking in one section, while the other areas dry out, which is preferable to wet all the time. These heat loving crops are right where they want to be in this heat, although high humidity invites plant diseases and plays hostess to insects. The cool weather spring crops have come and gone so no worry there. Most fall crops will go out to the field in August to thrive in the cooler days going into winter. The intensive greens beds are outfitted with micro-sprinklers that run for short durations many times a day. This keeps the leaves cool, the soil cool, and enough moisture for translocation to keep the plant mechanisms cool.

The livestock are “fine” if sufficient shade is available, and water is readily available. Every few days when we move the cattle or sheep to a fresh paddock, shade is critical. If there is not enough, they will crowd together, making each other even hotter. I had to take a 100+ year old steel wheel wagon frame and fashion a shade mobile for the sheep, otherwise they would not adequately graze parts of the field. Trees are still the best shade provider.

The chickens and turkeys also must have plenty of shade, so the number of birds in each group correlates to shade capacity. When hot, the birds will stand there with their wings drooping off to the side to get some airflow onto the skin where there are no feathers. When really sweltering, we can unhook the hose to the waterer and sprinkle them to rapidly cool them off. At first, they shy away since they don’t really like rain, then they tend to migrate under the spray.

Weather patterns have changed in my lifetime. These days we plan for what should be but prepare for the unexpected. Seasonal patterns now are merely suggestions of cycles of years gone by. We employ the knowledge we have gained from our experiences over the years, and count on our diversity, and resilient systems to get us through. —Mac

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