AVOCADO PEACH SALSA

Adapted from ambitiouskitchen.com

2 peaches, diced, still slightly firm
1 avocado, diced, still slightly firm
1 ear corn, kernels cut off
3 Tbsp finely diced onion
1 jalapeno, seeded, diced
2 Tbsp finely diced cilantro
1 lime, juiced
salt and pepper

1. Place all ingredients in a medium bowl and mix to combine. Garnish with extra cilantro. Serve with multigrain tortilla chips, or atop salmon, fish tacos, grilled chicken, or shrimp. Serves 4-6.

JALAPENO CORN COLESLAW

Adapted from barefeetinthekitchen.com

8 c shredded cabbage
3 ears fresh corn
1/2 large jalapeno, minced
1/2 c chopped cilantro
2 green onions, sliced thin

Dressing:
3/4 c mayonnaise or plain greek yogurt
3 Tbsp sugar
2 Tbsp Dijon mustard
2 Tbsp fresh lime juice
1 tsp celery seeds
1/2 tsp kosher salt

1. In a small bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients.
2. In a large bowl, combine the remaining ingredients.
3. Pour dressing over cabbage mixture and toss well to coat. Serve immediately.

PEPERONATA

Adapted from chilipeppermadness.com

1/4 c olive oil
4 large bell peppers, sliced in strips
2 lb tomatoes, blanched, peeled, chopped
1 medium onion, sliced
4 cloves garlic, chopped
salt and pepper
basil leaves for serving
red pepper flakes and balsamic vinegar for serving (optional)

1. Add olive oil to large pan and heat to medium-low.
2. Add peppers, tomatoes, onion and garlic. Season with salt and pepper. Stir.
3. Cover and cook on medium-low for 30-60 minutes according to your preferred softness.
4. Garnish with basil, whole or chopped, and/or with spicy chili flakes.

ELMWOOD STOCK FARM

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.

Melons: Canteloupes are ripe and ready to cut soon; store in the refrigerator. Watermelon can be kept at room temperature or refrigerated if you have space. Cover cut melon with plastic wrap. Keep cubes or slices in an airtight container. Eat within a week after you cut it open.

Peaches: Allow unripe peaches to ripen in a closed bag or container on a countertop; or out on the counter. To slow down ripening, keep refrigerated. Cut peaches can be kept for 3-4 days in the fridge.

Onions: Candy onions are not yet dried, so for best storage, keep refrigerated. If you start to see green sprouting, onions are still good, just use soon. Green onions should always be refrigerated.

Sweet Corn: Plan to eat your corn soon after you receive it. As time elapses after harvest, the sugars turn into starches, and the corn loses its sweetness. To store, refrigerate sweet corn as soon as possible. Keep husks on.

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Mother Nature Goes Hi Tech

In our quest to bring you responsibly grown food, we have access to technologies our ancestors could not even imagine. Beyond all the knowledge of the world in our pocket, manufacturing components and building materials designed for specific industrial applications are now available for our unique applications out here on the farm. From electric fencing to high tunnels, there is some pretty cool stuff for us to work with, as were care for our land and produce food respectful of Mother Nature.

Elmwood Stock Farm is divided up into 10 or 12 fields, depending on how you count. The founders of Elmwood back in the 1700's built a beautiful brick home with a tree lined driveway and constructed some version of fencing establishing its boundary and to contain livestock. It was a pretty big project to cut trees for posts and rails and fashion them into a sturdy barrier, but I'm sure it seemed easier than mining cliff faces and stacking rows of rocks. The Robert Holmes family gave us the basic grid from which we work today. The earliest fencerows have enormous trees. As wire fencing materials came into vogue, other fences were erected to allow the farmers to keep cattle and sheep away from the tobacco fields. The overall layout of barns and water systems were also determined by those early developers. The regenerative lens through which we view farming systems comes from those same forefathers: no self-respecting farmer would allow for soil erosion, underfeed their stock, or contaminate the land. They set this farm to run on its own, plants collecting solar energy and animals rearing their young. We revere all the ways they set us up to farm the land in the 21st century.

The age old fencerows are the backbone of our grazing grid. But with today's technology we can put up a fence within minutes that contains any type of livestock, anywhere. Electric fencing systems are powered by energizers that run off solar panels, battery, or household current. They range in size from palm-sized gizmos that can be hung on a post to stronger shoebox-sized units to be mounted on a wall. They are rated on joules and the more joules, the more jolt. When touched by beast or man, it sends this shivering shock through most of your body, including your brain, imprinted immediately to not ever touch that again, without actually hurting you. A psychological barrier is born. The fencing itself ranges from single spools of plastic twine with metal fibers interwoven, to nets of various size weave, depending on the intended use. Plastic posts are attached to the nets, making it easy to walk along and stick the spike on the bottom of the post into the ground. Counter-intuitively, it's easier to contain a thousand pound cow than a five pound chicken.

On any given day, single strands of poly-wire are stretched between the permanent fence, which allows us to rotate the animals around the farm to more efficiently harvest the grass, which means we can be husband to more than our ancestors could possibly imagine, without negative impact, actually self-improving, something our ancestors would be proud of.

Just a few generations ago, farm families loaded their larders with root crops in the cellars, home canned veggies, smoked meats, and kept chickens to survive until the next growing season came. Gardening in the winter was crazy talk. To this day, many rural people don't "put the garden out" until May. Clear plastic sheeting, metal tubing and simple fasteners have changed all that. Glass greenhouses go way back for rich and famous people, and nowadays, sophisticated million-dollar-an-acre glass houses grow produce and flowers for big box stores. With the advent of plastic sheeting a few decades ago, farmers began fashioning makeshift structures to protect their tender seedlings from the cold. This meant they could have the first veggies at the farmers markets and sell veggies over a longer season. These early adopters probably had no idea just how far farmer ingenuity would take their idea.

For clarity in grower vernacular, a greenhouse is a heated facility and a high tunnel is an unheated structure where the crops grow in the soil. They look a lot alike at first glance; we have two heatable greenhouses for transplants and curing onions, and three versions of high tunnels. The USDA had a local food production incentive program where they granted us funds to buy the high tunnel kit, we just had to put it up. Drive the 100 or so posts, connect the arched pipe bows, stretch the huge specialized plastic sheeting, hold it in place with wiggle wire and overnight, we had (and still have) the ability to provide local foods all winter. Pretty cool huh?

Each of these examples is how modern technology fits within our vision of regenerative farming systems. One takes solar energy and converts it into plants that fuel our bodies, the other converts solar energy into nutritious protein. We have forgone any thoughts of get-rich-quick technologies like synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. We think the founders of Elmwood Stock Farm would be pleased to see how we have taken their idea and run with it. - Mac