

SIMPLE GREEN BEAN SALAD

Adapted from asouthernsoul.com

1 lb green beans	1/4 c olive oil
12 oz cherry, grape, or salad tomatoes, cut in half	1 1/2 tsp Dijon mustard
1 c yellow onion, thinly sliced	1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 c feta cheese crumbles	1 tsp salt
2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice	1/2 tsp pepper

1. To a large pot of boiling, salted water, add green beans, and cook for 2 minutes. Drain beans, pat dry, and place in a large bowl. Add tomatoes, onions, and feta cheese.
2. In a small bowl or jar with a lid, add lemon juice, olive oil, Dijon mustard, garlic, salt, and pepper. Whisk or mix together. Pour dressing over vegetables and toss. Taste and adjust seasoning. Let marinate 15 minutes and serve.

HONEY POACHED PEARS WITH GREEK YOGURT

Adapted from kalofagas.ca

1 1/2 c sugar	4 pears, halved, de-seeded
4 c water	1 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 c honey	2 c strained Greek yogurt
1 cinnamon stick or star anise	granola, for garnish
3 strips lemon peel	

1. Use a pot that will contain all your pear halves. To the pot add sugar, water, honey, cinnamon, and lemon peel. Simmer over medium heat for 10 minutes.
2. Carefully place the pears in the poaching liquid, cover with parchment paper with a small hole in the middle.
3. Poach the pears in a very gentle boil, for about 15 minutes or until a knife can easily pierce through.
4. Remove pears from the liquid and allow to cool. Continue simmering the poaching liquid for another 15 minutes or until thick, then allow to cool.
5. To serve, spread yogurt on each plate, place pear halves on top, spoon over poaching liquid, garnish with granola, and serve.



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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 as needed by plunging them in ice water 15-20 minutes.

Okra: Wrap unwashed in a paper towel to absorb any moisture, and keep in the veggie drawer of your refrigerator.

Celery and Herbs: Recut the ends and stand up in a jar of water in the fridge, for up to two weeks. Basil should be on the counter instead.

Fall Squash (delicata and spaghetti): Delicata is small and oblong with yellow and green coloring and delicate, edible skin. The flesh of spaghetti squash forms spaghetti-like strands when cooked. Spaghetti stores longer than delicata, but keep them all in a cool, dry, dark place around 50 degrees.

Pears: There is no “right” time to eat a pear but you can tell ripeness by lightly squeezing. If you don’t know what ripeness you like, experiment and eat them at all the stages of green to yellow! To speed up ripening, put pears in a closed paper bag with an already-ripe apple or banana. Check daily. To slow down ripening, refrigerate.

Conservation as the Cornerstone

We speak often about crop rotation and organic principles around plant production in these newsletters, yet recently we realized we have not gone into much detail about conservation measures we employ to be good stewards of the land. We are blessed with magnificent soil here at Elmwood Stock Farm, and we do everything we can to improve it as we convert solar energy into nutritious foods for you and, by extension, human energy. Wendell Berry personally referred to us as good farmers for including conservation practices, and for that we are very proud.

In our animal- and crop-rotation plan, each acre of land has its assigned purpose. Every eight years, we plow down alfalfa hay fields and plant them in our rows of little vegetable seeds or transplanted seedlings. This is obviously disrupting to the plants, insects, microbes and aggregate soil particles that have called it home for so many years. We most often use a moldboard plow, which basically undercuts the field about 8 inches deep and flips it upside down. The nutrients released from the now-decomposing plants and all the related biota immediately start re-colonizing the underground rhizosphere to give a good start to the little plants that we're about to put into the soil.

Good soil conservation dictates that the ground is always worked on the contours of the slope of the field. For the initial tillage, we use a five-bottom 16-inch plow. This leaves the field rough, which helps spring rains infiltrate easily, reducing the risk of erosion as long as the rows are perpendicular to the slope. If one were to plow up and down the slope, the lower area between the humps of each plowshare would act like a gutter and erode a gully every 16 inches, effectively washing away tons of topsoil. These same dips between the plowshare humps act like little berms that hold water until it has time to infiltrate into the soil.

Secondary tillage to smooth the surface and prepare a seed bed is also done on the contour for the same reason. This is not as easy as it sounds, given the undulating hills and slopes of the topography of the Bluegrass Region. Working soils when too wet can ruin the structure of the soil, and tillage does not work well when too dry. A “good farmer” is steadfast in limiting erosion while prepping the fields in a timely fashion for planting.

Planting on the contours is equally important, whether the plants are growing on bare ground or, even more importantly, in strips of plastic mulch. Since the plastic sheds rainwater, it is important to encourage the water not to collect and run down a slope, so we use the raised-bed berms of plastic to hold the water in place

to infiltrate and nourish the plant roots underneath. Bare-ground plantings get cultivated several times a year, which loosens the soil, making it at risk of erosion which is why contour farming is so critical.

Understanding individual fields on a farm means becoming familiar with the lay of the land. Fields that require little consideration of all of this are said to lay well. Some fields have variable slope patterns and/or variable soil types in the same field, which require more attention to detail. Sometimes, we will have several row patterns in the same field. We might also leave a portion of the field in sod, where the water naturally drains away, letting the established plants and their roots hold the soil in place. These are called sod waterways; you should see them in some fields as you drive through the countryside.

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which used to be called the Soil Conservation Service, has funds available to incentivize farmers to employ conservation measures on their farms. Wind breaks save lots of soil loss in the Great Plains and are, therefore, a good investment in national food security. In our area, programs are available to offset the cost of various erosion-control measures, plant beneficial insect habitat, employ cover-cropping systems, and more. These investments in stabilizing the soil, for the good of society, date back to the Dust Bowl years. What a wakeup call that was.

Here at Elmwood Stock Farm, we have six, going on seven, generations of good farming techniques bred into our heritage. Our few inches of topsoil are our livelihood. First and foremost, we do everything we can to keep it in place. Building the organic matter, increasing the diversity of microbes that develop structure within the soil particles, rotating crops with differing types of root structures, and long rest periods in hay and pasture are other tools we have to maintain, if not build, soil. This gets to the art of farming.

In The Gift of Good Land, Wendell says: “We have neglected the truth that a good farmer is a craftsman of the highest order, a kind of artist.” I could not agree more. - Mac

Fall CSA signups are open!
Save your spot at
<https://elmwoodstockfarm.com/csa/about-csa/>