

GLORIOUS GOJI GREEN SMOOTHIE

Adapted from greensmoothiegirl.com

3 ½ cups ice	1 c dried/soaked goji berries
3 large handfuls spinach	2 c strawberries
2 handfuls arugula	2 bananas, frozen, in chunks
Extra spinach, added until blender mixture reaches 6 cup line	3 oranges
	2 dates, pitted

1. Add ingredients one at a time, blend until just barely mixed in, and then blend until smooth.

GRASS GREEN EASTER SMOOTHIE

Adapted from smoothiesippin.com

1 c spinach	1 tsp honey (optional)
1 frozen banana	handful of ice cubes
½ c frozen mango	coconut flakes (optional)
¾ c coconut water	chia seeds (optional)
½ tsp vanilla extract	

1. Add all ingredients to high-speed blender. Blend until smooth and creamy.
2. Pour into glass and top with coconut flakes or chia seeds for extra texture.

EASY ARUGULA PESTO

Adapted from lifeasastrawberry.com

4 c arugula, packed	2 Tbsp lemon juice
½ c walnuts	kosher salt to taste
½ c shredded parmesan	½ c olive oil
2 cloves garlic, peeled OR few stalks of green garlic, chopped	

1. Add arugula, walnuts, parmesan, garlic, lemon juice, and salt to the bowl of a food processor. Pulse 5-10 times, until the mixture is evenly chopped and has formed a rough paste.
2. Turn food processor off and scrape down the sides of the bowl.
3. With food processor running, slowly stream in olive oil until pesto has reached desired consistency. You likely won't need it all. Scrape down the sides of the food processor again as necessary.
4. Serve immediately or store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to a week. Freezes well.



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

Winter Radishes: Refrigerate in a plastic bag or other closed container. Daikon and Watermelon radish will keep well for weeks.

Sweet Potato: Store at room temperature. Refrigeration will cause them to harden and blacken when cooked. Check weekly and use any that may soften, most will keep for weeks or months.

Jarred Items: It's the best time of year to include Elmwood's organic Diced Tomatoes, BBQ or Salsa in your seasonal recipes—think chili, lasagna, soups, or what about as a pizza topping?

Mushrooms: Storing mushrooms in plastic bags or containers can cause discoloration, mold, or an undesirable texture. Refrigerate mushrooms in a paper bag with a paper towel inside to absorb moisture.

Stability Through Diversity

The more diverse an ecosystem is, the more stable it becomes. This is a law of nature. From our rich, fertile soils here at Elmwood Stock Farm to the jungles along the equator, this is true. With this law in mind, we have chosen to raise lots of crops and rear several species of mammals and birds as a stabilizing force in our little ecosystem, as well as in our business model. If a late freeze takes out the strawberries, it drops the spring revenue a bit, but it doesn't ruin the whole year; we can try to make it up elsewhere. But dang, all that diversity means there's a lot to keep up with!

Our plan starts with a question: what does this little patch of earth offer us biologically? Capturing the solar energy with forage through ruminants on the hillsides, cultivating the soil with the long view in mind, just as nature does, is agriculture by definition. We put the emphasis on culture. Our forefathers knew how to read the lay of the land, to establish a stable lifestyle, while doing no harm. The fence lines, locations of houses and barns we use today, spring developments, all were decided some 200 years ago, all with the intent to become an integral part of the ecosystem, and provide for their families. Passing the land and all she holds to the next generation was paramount in their thought process; after all, one doesn't foul one's own nest. We are caring for a farm that has been well-tended for generations.

So to harvest all the potential, and sell it for money, while doing no harm, means there is always something to do. This is not a woe-is-me soliloquy—we choose this life and wouldn't have it any other way. Such intimate relations with the wonders of nature can be had by no other means. But dang, there's a lot to keep up with!

Spring equates to planting season. We did catch the proper soil conditions earlier in the year and planted peas, beets, carrots, etc, but any day now, conditions will be prime to plant all kinds of crops once danger of frost has passed. Speaking of which, prognosticating the weather forecast is an art form. The windows of opportunity to work the soil and run the seeders or transplanters across the fields, are random. Because we embrace biological diversity, so many things have to be choreographed to optimize the potential when the weather suits. For starters, some fields dry out sooner than others based on soil type, slope, aspect, previous cropping history, degree of tillage necessary, and other factors, so we have to take that into account. Then we have to have the proper seeds in inventory, because little seeds are planted closer to the surface than big ones, which affects what we can plant when. We have to have the right transplants sized up and hardened off just right, because they need to be large enough to be handled by the setter, with a good root ball, but not so large that the leaves will

get hung up in the process. We can control this by managing moisture and temperature in the greenhouse. We have to have the right kind of equipment prepared, and then we have to have at least three people drop everything and drive the tractor and feed the setter.

The daily, almost hourly, shifting of priorities based on weather and soil conditions is not for the faint of heart. Weeding the strawberries can be done when it's too wet for field work, but it's not too much fun in the rain. Fencing and cleaning up fallen trees or tree limbs can be done when it's too wet for anything else. These jobs are necessary so that fields can be mowed or tilled. There is always a list of rainy day work and office responsibilities to fill any voids in the days or weeks. And the markets go on, rain or shine.

The livestock not only add diversity to the products we market, and generate income from the forage maintained on the hilly ground, they are much less weather dependent. We try not to do chores in the rain, but if it is rainy, we suit up, because they really don't care if it's raining. Lambs started coming last week, turkey eggs are going into the incubators, new pullets are on the way, calves are to be weaned soon, but this will set in motion daily chores that are manageable when the field work really ramps up, effectively balancing our seasonal labor demands. Diversity equals stability. But dang, there's a lot to keep up with!

Some farmers choose to grow a single crop, just grain for example, for the commodity markets. But their risk exposure is greater: they may not be ready to plant at the right time, may not have the equipment to harvest large volumes in a short amount of time, or may suffer a hail storm that devastates the crop. This is somewhat offset by steady demand at a predictable price. The more they grow, the more they sell. To be clear, big crop farmers are not bad people for using GMO technologies and applying numerous pesticides to their crops. The marketplace has driven them to this, they have no choice. The cheap food policy in this country is the driving force. They are good people trying to stay on the land, just like we are. They do seem to have more time available for other things between tasks, I wonder what that must feel like.

We are not the deciders; the laws of nature show us the way. We don't just commune with nature, we are one population of one species within the thousands of others, sharing this place. Sure, we are a major player, but only in the sense that we decide how to react to stimuli. Most everything else acts predictably in some linear fashion. Our role is to guide the plants and animals through life with a sense of calm and stability. It has become more intuitive as we have experienced more combinations of influences. This intimate insertion into the ecosystem we have evolved into Elmwood Stock Farm, is the most rewarding feeling in the world. The results are well worth the effort. But dang, there's a lot to keep up with! - Mac