

PEAR SALAD WITH BLUE CHEESE

Adapted from recipetineats.com

1½ -2 pears, juicy and ripe	1 ½ Tbsp honey
¾ c whole walnuts (or almonds/pecans)	1 ½ Tbsp cider vinegar
4 oz salad mix (or arugula or spinach)	1 ½ Tbsp olive oil
4 oz blue cheese crumbles	¼ tsp salt
<u>Dressing:</u>	⅛ tsp black pepper
1 ½ Tbsp Dijon mustard	

1. Put dressing ingredients in a jar and shake to combine.
2. Halve the pears, then scoop out core. Place cut face down and slice into 3mm slices.
3. Spread walnuts on tray and toast in 350F oven for 8 minutes or until fragrant. Leave some whole, break some in half.
4. Toss salad greens with 2 Tbsp dressing.
5. To assemble, pile ⅓ greens on a platter. Scatter with ⅓ pears, ⅓ walnuts, and ⅓ blue cheese crumbles. Repeat twice more. Drizzle with remaining dressing just before serving.

PERSIAN CELERY AND BEEF STEW

Adapted from thecaspianchef.com

6 Tbsp olive oil, divided	1 tsp salt
1 onion, diced	½ tsp ground black pepper
½ tsp turmeric, ground	1 bunch celery, in 1" pieces
1 lb beef roast or lamb shoulder cut into 1" cubes	2 c finely chopped fresh parsley
2 ½ c water	½ c finely chopped fresh mint
	1 Tbsp dry mint
	½ c fresh lime juice

1. Heat 2 Tbsp olive oil in large pot and saute onions on medium for 10 minutes.
2. Add turmeric and toss for a couple of minutes before adding the beef/lamb pieces. Continue to stir over medium heat for about 5 minutes until the meat has picked up some color and no longer looks raw.
3. Add water, salt, and pepper. Cover and simmer over low heat for 30 minutes.
4. While the beef simmers, add remaining olive oil to large pan and saute celery pieces over medium heat for 15 minutes.
5. Once celery has slightly softened, add parsley and fresh mint and saute for an additional 10 minutes. Add the dried mint, stir, and remove from heat.
6. After the beef has cooked for 30 minutes, add lime juice and celery mixture. Cover and continue to cook for 60-75 minutes over low heat.
7. Serve with Persian saffron basmati rice and a side of plain yogurt.



Fall CSA News



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Fall Squash (butternut, spaghetti, delicata, sweet dumpling, pumpkin): Store in a cool, dry location, but don't let them freeze; keep 3-4 months, but once cut, refrigerate and use within 5-7 days.

Leafy greens: Store unwashed in its plastic bag. Or chop, wash, and dry with a salad spinner, and return to plastic bag with a dry paper towel to absorb moisture. Always refrigerate.

Apples and Pears: To speed up ripening, put in a closed bag on the counter and check periodically. To keep for later, put in the fridge, and pull out a day or two ahead of when needed.

Celery: Recut the ends and refrigerate standing in a jar of water. It should keep for up to two weeks. Be sure to use the leaves, the best part! If frozen, celery maintains its flavor and is best used in soups. To freeze, slice and spread on baking sheet; place in freezer. Once frozen, store in airtight container.

Carrots, Radishes, Turnips: Remove the root from the greens if they are attached and store separately in the fridge.

Sweet Potatoes: Store sweet potatoes at room temperature and they will keep for weeks or months. Refrigeration will cause them to harden and turn black when you cook them!

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Soil is Soul

The foundation Elmwood Stock Farm is built on is a soil called Maury Silt Loam. This is a type of soil that is considered fertile with good structural components. How well plants perform is based on the physical and chemical properties associated with each type of soil and the wildly complex biological happenings within the microbial community in the soil, out of sight. As farmers, we try to optimize the health of the soil so that our vegetables and forage are the best they can be, both this season and 10 seasons from now. This soil management is both a science and an art.

The Science of Soil Management

Looking at the soil with the naked eye, you would think there's not much to it. It's just a bunch of dirt, after all. But the science behind it all is impressive. Structural components of the soil are classified into three groups: sand, silt and clay particles. But the characteristics of the dirt are determined by the ratio between those three particle types. Sand particles, if you were to look with a magnifying glass, are like big boulders that have big gaps between them, allowing water and air to pass between them easily. Silt would be comparable to pebbles that fit between the boulders. Clay particles are tiny, flat structures that stick to one another and fill in remaining voids.

Here in the Bluegrass region, the sub-soil tends to have a higher ratio of clay, which can form impenetrable barriers to roots, air and water. Since clay has a tendency to fill in gaps, more clay means fewer voids in the soil structure. And with fewer voids, it's harder for roots to penetrate downwards and outwards, and it's harder for air and water to reach those roots. Clay-heavy soil is therefore a challenging environment for a plant's root system. And root health directly impacts the plant's ability to be well anchored and reach the nutrients it needs for optimum growth. But a good mixture is considered a healthy soil, which we are blessed with on Elmwood Stock Farm.

The chemical properties of soils are important and are directly related to the structural components. Reaching back to high-school chemistry, the particles include tiny positively- and negatively-charged pieces called cations and anions. Like magnets, a strong positive charge will hold a negatively charged anion in place. This is the action that holds available nutrients—like calcium, magnesium, sulfur, etc.—in the root zone. We monitor the Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC), which is an indicator of how well the soil's "battery" is charged, revved up and running. Plant roots and their symbiotic mycorrhizal fungi mineralize these nutrients for plant growth, but only when the soil particle is willing to give them up. Our relatively high CEC numbers—determined by a laboratory test—demonstrate healthy exchange of nutrients.

The biological properties of a soil bring all these factors to life and set them in motion. There are tens of thousands of species of bacteria, fungi and microscopic insects that colonize the soil. The more diverse these colonies are, the more likely they are to foster good plant growth. This microscopic ecosystem is called the soil food web. The microbes and microscopic insects, along with earthworms and larger insects, align the structural components to form little havens—even structural houses—called aggregates. Within these aggregates are chambers that hold water to feed the microbes and the plant roots that encounter them. As these microbes prosper, they release nutrients to feed the plants and re-charge the CEC.

We partnered with researchers from the UK College of Agriculture to monitor the diversity and populations of the components of our soil food web. The results indicated that, with our crop- and livestock-rotation plan, we can harvest vegetables three years in eight while maintaining a vibrant soil food web. While we rarely feed the soil with rock dust to add minerals and trace elements, we have no frequent need for off-farm fertility fixes to feed our plants.

The Art of Soil Management

All that is the science, now for the art of soil management. From decades of sound farming practices, our soils are like Olympic decathletes. The sand, silt and clay particles have been managed by us, the plants, and the diverse array of microbes to be able to perform in all conditions. Too much rain, and they drain the excess away efficiently. Too little rain, and they hang on to all the moisture they can. A little disruption from cultivation, and they easily reform their colonies. Because we've made consistent effort to take care of the soil, the soil can also take care of us.

While it may be a bunch of dirt at first glance, we are quite proud of the soils we have built here at Elmwood Stock Farm. When put all together, these soils would be considered not just healthy, but rich. We hope you enjoy the results of these riches, in the form of wholesome veggies.— Mac Stone

Have you pre-ordered your holiday turkey?

Learn more about our turkeys and reserve the size and type that works best for your gathering. Certain sizes do sell out, so be sure to make your plans and order soon!

<https://elmwoodstockfarm.com/turkeys>