



Central Coast Chapter CRFG

April 2023 Newsletter
by Jenny Weaver & Tom Sheldon
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Next CRFG Meeting

Open to the public- Invite your friends and neighbors!

When: Saturday May 13, 2013

Where: Black Diamond Vermicompost
5325 Broken Spur Place, Paso Robles.

Important message from host: Do not follow Google Maps, Mapquest etc. Many roads are washed out (Linne Rd. and others. Follow her map from point A on Hiway 41-East to-B (her property). See map on following page.

Schedule:	12:00-1:00	Set Up Crew
	1:00 -3:30	Socialize, snack, CRFG meeting announcements and presentation by host Cristy Christie
	3:30-4:00	Clean up

As always, please bring healthful snacks to share, a chair, hat, and water. No pets!

Bio provided by CRISTY CHRISTIE - BLACK DIAMOND VERMICOMPOST

Cristy Christie is the owner/operator of Black Diamond VermiCompost, a Paso Robles company with over a million redworm "employees." These compost worms produce vermicompost, aka worm castings. The food her worms process is very special and totally organic and they live in quite a fancy environment! The final product, Black Diamond Vermicompost, is rich in organic matter and loaded with diverse communities of bacteria, fungi, beneficial nematodes, protozoa and more – all aerobic soil microbes, essential for truly healthy soil.

Cristy grew up in Pozo, CA in the central coastal County of San Luis Obispo on a cattle ranch, where her family still lives.

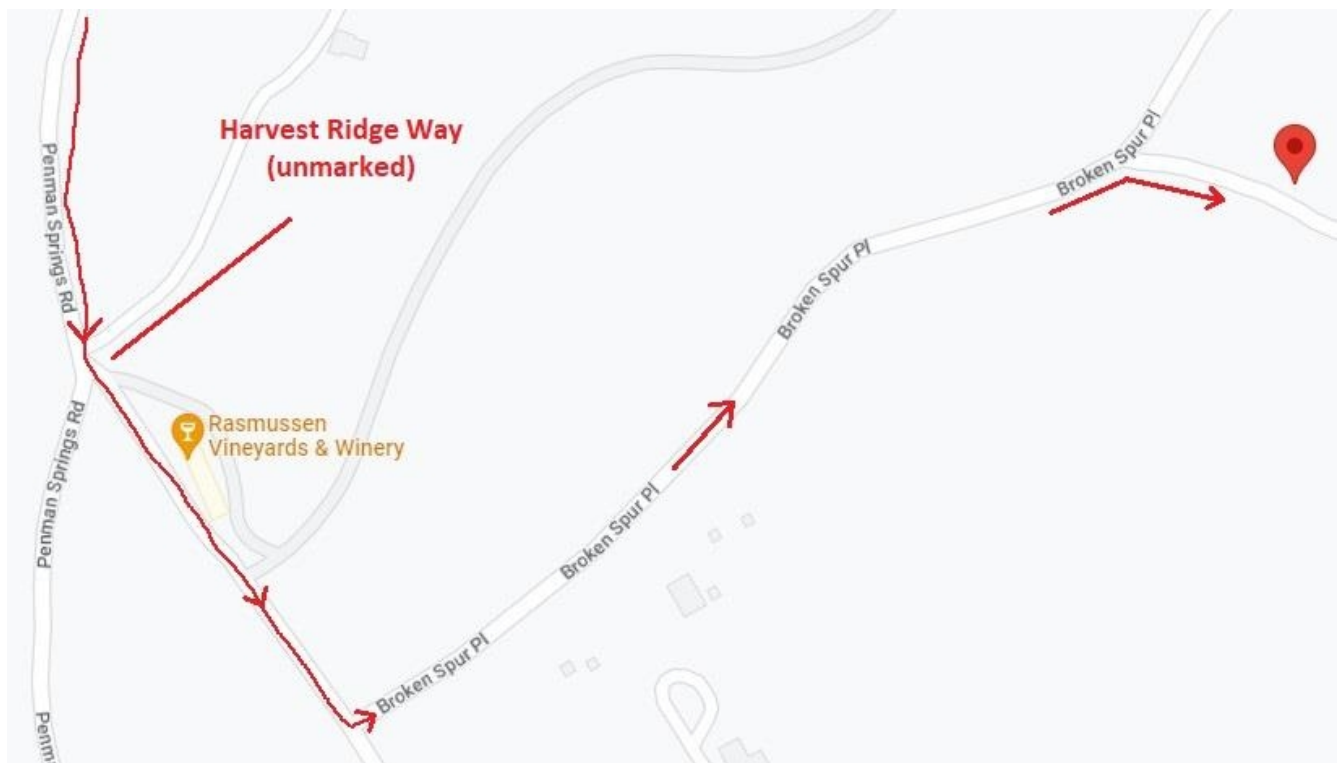
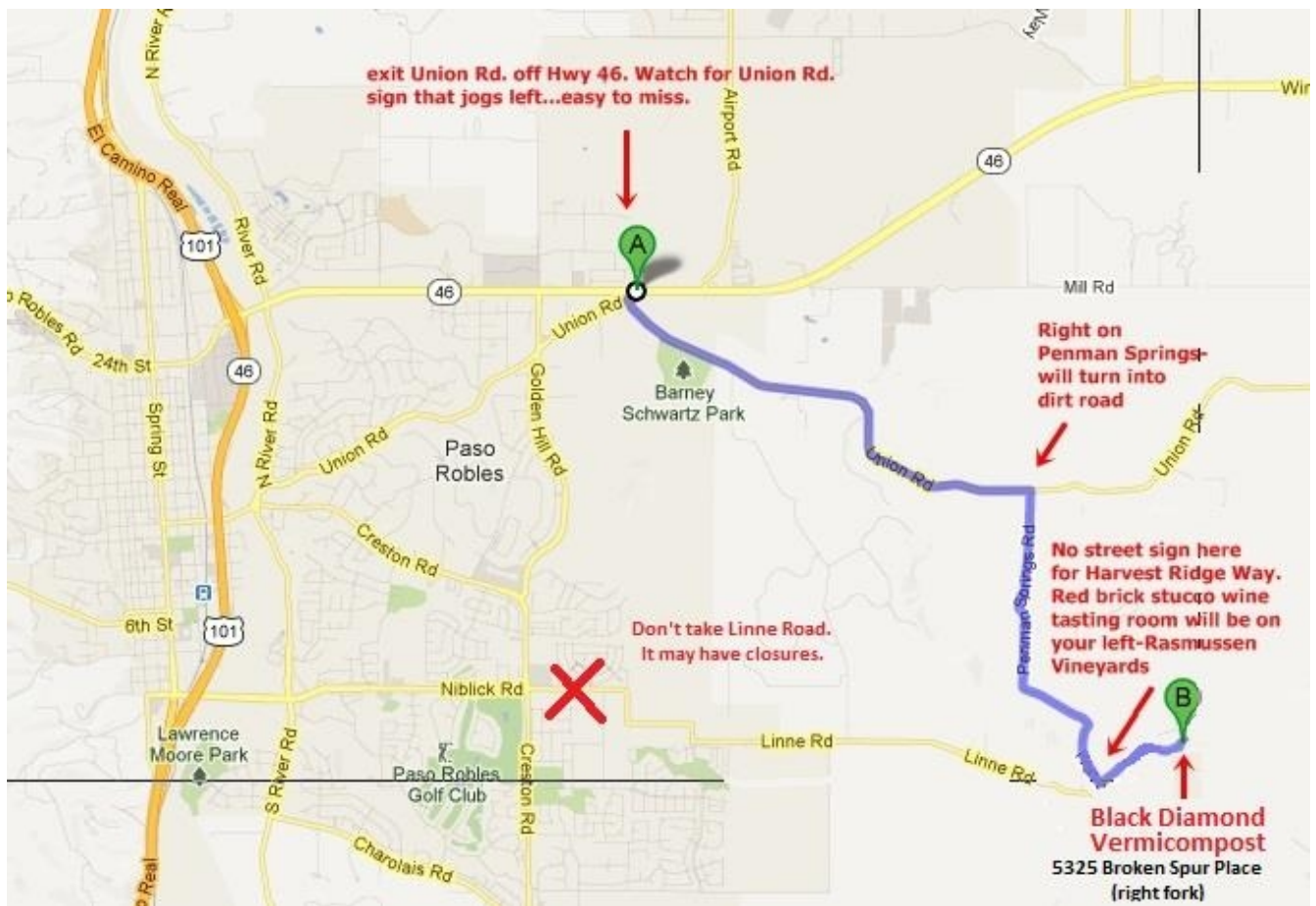
She explains her introduction to worm farming this way: "I have worn many hats over the years. It seemed like I changed careers as often as I change socks. Every few years a new opportunity arose, and I jumped on the band wagon. And I was good at all of them! So why the need for constant change? Simple...I lacked passion. When I was introduced to vermicomposting, living soil and what growing healthy food really means, it was far from my knowledge base. But something about it intrigued me and the deeper I went, the more excited I became. I came to realize I had finally found my "purpose."

After 14 years, I know what it takes to run a vermicomposting operation, having successes and plenty of failures, and I have a deep understanding of what makes a facility hum. I really like the educational aspect of it too – holding workshops on topics like Back Yard Composting, How to Set Up A Worm Bin, How To Test Your Garden Soil, to name a few."

Cristy has attended several international vermiculture conferences learning from educators and scientists in the field. Her soil and microbiology library is extensive and she spends plenty of time using her microscope, assessing her own vermicompost and compost teas, as well as evaluating customers' soils and composts. She has presented at vermiculture conferences and workshops around the country.

Cristy enjoys donating time and vermicompost to a variety of organizations for planting projects, fundraising events and community activities. She has spoken to garden clubs and other groups across the local counties. Consulting takes Cristy around the country. Most projects are centered around building new vermicomposting facilities and helping others in the same business get over the many hurdles they face. You will no doubt hear: "If it was as easy as it looks, everyone would be doing it."

blackdiamondvermicompost.com cristy@blackdiamondvermicompost.com



Announcements

Important message from Larry Hollis (nomination chair) and Linda Robertson (interim chapter chair) 4/16/23

Seth McMillan has stepped down as chapter chair because of other commitments. At our April 8 meeting and at an informal gathering afterwards a few of us, including chapter vice-chair Linda Robertson, informally discussed how the chapter should move forward following Seth's resignation. We concluded that we would find someone to step in, to back Linda up until the next election. Manny Magana said that he was willing to assist Linda if we needed him. The nominating committee agreed to support the nomination of Manny as interim vice-chair and Linda as interim chair. These nominations were approved by the chapter's leadership and will serve until next December's election.

Message from the Newsletter Editors: The main purpose of the newsletter is to provide information about CRFG activities, upcoming meetings and events, and any messages from the Chapter Board or Committee Chairs.

Please help with news items, outside events, and submissions of any type. For example, you could write a brief description of your orchard and its history, or an article about your success (or not) in growing a particular type of fruit. Believe it or not, other people in our group are really interested in this information. We've been talking to members about the newsletter content, and many have expressed their interest in what other people are doing and the success of their fruit trees or orchards.

If you have volunteered or attended an event representing our Chapter, please take photos and write up a description including the five Ws: Who, What, Where, When & Why. If you don't tell us, we don't know who is doing what! A few photos with a description and names of the people is very welcome and appreciated. Remember, "A picture is worth a thousand words."

Let others know what's going on by sending your articles, photos, and event info to: crfgccnewsletter@gmail.com. Please submit your items by the 15th of each month for inclusion in the next newsletter."

Dara, Manny and Jesse, the CRFG Demonstration orchard co-managers invite you to:

CRFG Orchard Workday: Saturday, May 20th 9am – Noon

Where: Cal Poly Campus, San Luis Obispo
South side of Highland Drive. Between Crops Unit and Hiway 1.

Spring has sprung and it's time for Spring cleanup in the orchard!
Join us! There's a job for everyone.

Please bring your pruners and shovels, shoes suitable for working in the orchard, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, and your own water bottle.

We'll bring some snacks.

Here are some of the jobs we'll be working on:

Dig out invasive fountain grass on the hill in the back of the orchard

Dig out invasive weeds in the back of the orchard

Orchard tabletop: remove old, damaged wood and replace with new wood (provided)

Remove weeds from around the smallest trees (we'll remove their protective fencing, pull the weeds, and put the fencing back)

Reorganize the tool shed (remove all contents, throw out anything that is no longer useful, sweep out, restock)

Thin fruit as needed

Sweep cobwebs off inside and outside of kiosk

Mow the orchard

Thank You Note from Cal Poly, March 23, 2023:

Good afternoon CRFG Central Coast Chapter Leadership,

Before the quarter officially ends here at Cal Poly, Daniela and I are reaching out to express our immense gratitude for your help with this year's 26 Hours program. We had an amazing time hosting the 15 high schools on campus and value the commitment you showcased.

The prospective students gained a lot of knowledge at the grafting workshop and were immersed in the different industry sectors throughout the two days. Beyond helping provide this knowledge, you showed them that there is a place for them in higher education. Thank you for assisting in the workshop and encapsulating our learn-by-doing philosophy.

I am grateful for your willingness to work with Eddy, Mr. Alex Flores, and the department to provide this experience for our attendees. I hope that future conferences are as successful and engaging as this one! Thanks once again-- please reach out if you need anything from us.

Best regards,

Isaac Lopez
Agricultural Science Undergraduate
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

Meeting Notes and Presentation

Report by Jenny Weaver

Our chapter had two meetings this month! One was on April 1, and that's no joke! It was postponed from Saturday 3/11 due to another atmospheric river. And April 8th our regular meeting was on the usual 2nd Saturday of the month.

April 1, 2023 Propagation Workshop at the Orchard

See all photos at end of this article.

The April 1st Propagation workshop was held at our CRFG Demonstration Orchard at Cal Poly. It was organized and directed by Nell Wade and Tucker Schmidt. They arranged to have pots, potting soil, scion wood, rootstocks, labels and everything else needed to propagate.

Thank You to Nell for the extra rootstocks she ordered and stored in her spare fridge. And to Tucker for saving scion wood, storing it and overseeing the grafting table.

Cuttings (mulberry, fig and Dragon Fruit) were potted, seeds (macadamia) were planted, scion wood was grafted, strawberry and tomato plants were potted up.

Terri M. sold some of the left-over garden and grafting items from The Store that was at the February Scion Exchange.

Members hung pheromone loops in the apple and pome fruit trees to confuse the male codling moths.

After all the propagating was finished and the pots lined up, they were well watered.

Roxy raffled off the beautiful quilt which was donated by the Quilting Angels.

The lucky winner, member Owen Hackelman's mother Bev, was not present but Roxo contacted her.

Update to Propagation Meeting

Message from Nell W. April 13

Check out Dara's photo. She and Manny moved all the babies under the Sycamore and put them on drip emitters! They look happy and ready to take off. What a great job we all did working together for the common good!

Thanks!

Nell



Nell potting strawberry plants. All following photos by Jenny and permission from newcomers for photos to be included.



Clockwise from the left: Roxy, Linda, Yves, Jesse, Jack



Clockwise from bottom left: Linda, Jesse, Dick, Tucker, Jack



From the left: Mark, Clark & Jean (Terri's Mom)



Left: Clark . Right Judy



From the left: Trudi, Bebe potting strawberries. Keri



Yves (left) Dominique (right). Yves et Dominique sont originaires de Belgique. Ils ont travaillé à Los Angeles et se sont retirés à Morro Bay. Welcome to CRFG!



Members hanging pheromone loops to confuse male coddling moths!



Else giving water and well wishes to plants. Terri selling garden decorations.



Co-manager Jesse and Meare (she's new and wants to join CRFG)



Roxy rallying the group for the quilt raffle.



All the plants ready to go and grow



Sharon Chiri-Lovelady pots up Mulberry cuttings



Sharon Chiri-Lovelady provided a plaque for orchard bench honoring her late father.



The pots with drip system installed by Dara and Manny.

April 8th, 2023

Our regular second Saturday meeting was at the home of Claudia and Joe. We met in a beautiful, remote verdant valley.

There were several new people who were invited by members. Larry H. brought his sisters who were visiting from out of state. Jenny invited a long time Cal Poly Fruit Science friend Dave S. and his wife Susan S. who live in Atascadero. It's a *small* world because Dave and Evelyn R. were talking, and Evelyn asked Dave if one of his professors was her late husband Tom R., a soil science professor. Dave had and said Tom R. was one of the best teachers he had at Cal Poly!

Our speaker was Jayme Finley from Finley Family Nursery located at 50 Vaquero Drive Templeton.

She greeted arriving CRFG members and guests with a raffle ticket. Jayme brought a selection of beautiful, interesting and excellent pollinator friendly plants from her nursery.

Jayme gave us their attributes and then raffled them off to some lucky recipients. There is more information available online.

1) California Poppy. "Yukon Gold". It's a special double flowered perennial. Mark W. won it.

2) Salvia "Mystic Spires". It has a purple bloom. The plant is deer tolerant and gopher resistant. Linda's partner, Michael K was thrilled to win it.

3) Salvia Hotlips. Unique flowers start out Red, then turn red & white and then white blooms. Drought tolerant. Deer & gopher resistant. Jenny's guest Susan S. won it.!

4) Echinacea. It's flat bloom is a perfect landing pad for butterflies. Its single petals make it easier for Pollinators. Seeds for birds. Deer & gopher resistant. CRFG member Deb won it.

5) Salidago Golden Fleece "Baby Gold". Goldenrod is often associated with pollen allergies. This one is "Non Allergic" and non invasive. Long time member Robert S. won it.

6) Calendula, It is the best for bees. It easily reseeds annual. Red/ yellow bicolor flower. Our youngest member Raine won it.

One way to encourage beneficials is to provide hollow logs. Jayme recommends using no pesticides. Even Neem oil affects beneficials so be cautious when spraying insect pests.

A few questions followed from a returning member, Rainbow. She was curious what evergreen fruit trees grew in the north county area.

Feijoas grow in north county. Loquats also grow, and there was one right across the street!

You can learn more about Finley Family Nursery here:
<https://www.finleyfamilynursery.com/>

CRFG Member's Good News

Information by Marv Daniels. Photos by Ed Buntz



Grafted apple trees enjoying the view in Hesperia! Photo by Ed Buntz

On March 17th, 2023, Marv D. and Jim R. went to Hesperia Hall, as they have for many years, to teach a grafting lesson to adult residents of the Bryson-Hesperia community.

Ed, Kate, Janice, Alex and others greeted Marv and Jim. After the grafting event they were treated to a great St. Patrick's meal. Marv said in one of his emails that he always enjoys the terrific meals that are provided.

If you want to see photos of the Saint Patrick's Potluck and Grafting Session, click this link: <http://hesperiahall.org/photos18.html>

Where and what in the heck is Hesperia Hall?!

(by Jenny)

It's located off the Bryson-Hesperia Road on Hesperia Hall Rd.

According to Bing:

"Bryson is an unincorporated community in Monterey County, California. It is located 12 miles south-southeast of Jolon, at an elevation of 968 feet. The Bryson post office operated from 1887 to 1937, moving in 1889, 1898, 1899, 1905, and 1906. The place, originally called Sapaque, was renamed in honor of an early settler and store owner.

Here's what their Hesperia Hall website says:

"THE HALL IS LOCATED IN THE BEAUTIFUL ROLLING HILLS BETWEEN LAKE SAN ANTONIO AND LAKE NACIMIENTO. GO TO THE "ABOUT US" PAGE TO FIND OUT ABOUT OUR HISTORY AND ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY AND CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES."

And Hesperia Hall Foundation is committed to the following objectives:

1. Provide educational opportunities for the Bryson-Hesperia community in such areas as college and trade school scholarships, music education, rural life skills, history, local environmental issues and agricultural methods applicable to our area.
2. Preserve and maintain Hesperia Hall as a suitable meeting and educational structure to facilitate the educational objectives as stated above.

Check out Hesperia Hall's website for more interesting information here <http://hesperiahall.org/index.html>

It sounds like a hidden treasure to me.

Seeds and Squash

By Jenny

With all the winter rain, I bet you've been doing some armchair gardening, looking at seed catalogs and dreaming of harvesting fresh fruits and vegetables from your garden.

Of course, you know that squash are technically a fruit. A squash is a tasty ovary around seeds. So zucchini, zuchetta and winter squash are really big, heavy, starchy fruit!

I can hear you thinking "why is she telling us about winter squash now"? Because if you haven't tried these, you can start them now!



Source: *The New Yorker*

Zucchetta Tromboncino

If you've never heard of *Zucchetta Tromboncino*, you should try growing it! Robert and Carol grow them annually. They are a long vine that grows over a sturdy arbor where the trombone-like fruit hang down. It would make a great, green fort for kids. You can eat them when they are green and tender like zucchini. OR you can leave them on the vine and they will develop a hard skin and they will keep like any other winter squash.



Green Zuchettas for summer squash and yellowing for winter squash hanging from metal trellis in Carol's yard. Photo by Jenny



Zuchetta staying on the vine to become winter squash at Carol's. Photo by Jenny

Here's how Pine Tree Seeds describes Zuchetta.

Italian Heirloom. This tasty zucchini grows like squash and will need a lot of room for its 15' runners. Light yellow-green fruit is slender with a bulbous end and should be harvested at about 10". Leaving it on the vine can produce variously twisted squash specimens 3' long and 6" wide and can be used as winter squash. A firmer zucchini than we're used to; the flavor is mild and delicious. Can be grown up a very strong trellis. Tolerates squash vine borer.

Tahitian Squash:

These look like a shorter and fatter Zuchetta squash.

*Tahitian squash, botanically classified as *Cucurbita moschata*, is the fruit of a large climbing vine and a member of the Cucurbitaceae family along with pumpkins and gourds. Also known as Melon squash, the Tahitian squash plant can produce over one hundred pounds of squash in one season with the fruits varying considerably in size and shape. Tahitian squash is a distant relative of the butternut squash and **is known as one of the longest storing winter varieties**. Even when cut, the*

Tahitian squash will develop a hard skin on the cut end of the remaining flesh, allowing it to be preserved for future use. This heirloom variety is extremely rare and is difficult to find in present day markets but is favored by squash enthusiasts for its storage capabilities, large size, dense flesh, and sweet flavor.



Tahitian winter squash drying at Carol's. Photo by Jenny

Yuxi Jiang Bing Gua Squash

summer or winter squash



Photo from Internet

Rare Seeds says this:

*70 days. An incredible, delicious treasure of old China! Hailing from southwest China. **This heirloom has stellar flavor.** This squash is most popular in the city of Yuxi, where the fruit is harvested when young and tender and used as a summer squash. Or let it mature into a delicious and sweet winter squash. The young fruit is tender with a nutty flavor and buttery texture, while the mature fruit is delectable, creamy, with sweet, deep orange flesh.*

Sweet Meat Winter Squash

Carol gave me one of these beautiful blue squashes last fall. It gradually changed color during storage to a pinkish skin.



Blue-turning-pink Sweet Meat winter squash drying at Carol's. Photo by Jenny



From left to right; Pinkish Sweet Meat, Spaghetti squash, small Banana Squash. Photo by Jenny

Here's what Territorial Seeds says about Sweet Meat squash:

*"Cucurbita maxima 115 days. One of the heirloom treasures of the Northwest. This 10-15 pound slate gray round squash is renowned for its superb keeping quality and unsurpassed rich, sweet flavor. **It makes the best pumpkin pie on Earth!** Vigorous vines grow to 10 feet. We sell the original uniform, high-yielding Gill Brothers strain."*

And Botanical Interests describes it like this:

"There is good reason this squash is called "sweet". This wonderful, large, 1940s heirloom treasure may not be well known, but after you grow it, you'll be spreading the word! With a fine-grained texture and delicious flavor, it is superb by itself, added to soups or roasts, and even baked into a pie that rivals pumpkin pie! Excellent for canning or freezing."

Recipes

Here is a very tasty recipe for winter squash. The recipe calls out butternut squash but you can substitute Zuchetta, Tahitian, Yuxi, or Sweet Meat squash.

Copied from the Tribune, by Ellie Krieger, Special to the Washington Post

Farro Risotto With Butternut Squash and Sage Recipe

From cookbook author and registered dietitian nutritionist Ellie Krieger.

45 minutes

4 servings (makes about 4 cups)

Here, nutty tasting and nutritious farro is given the risotto treatment, cooked gradually in ladles full of hot broth until creamy and the grain is tender but retains its enticing chew. It is studded with bites of sweet, caramelized roasted squash, seasoned with the pine-y brightness of fresh sage, and finished with a savory sprinkle of parmesan cheese and fresh parsley. Feel free to substitute any winter squash you're able to cube - such as acorn, kabocha, honeynut or delicata. And if you prefer to omit the wine, simply substitute more broth.

Make ahead: The squash can be roasted and refrigerated up to 3 days in advance.

Storage notes: Refrigerate leftovers for up to 3 days. Gently reheat over low heat until warmed through; you may need to add a little more broth to loosen the texture.

Where to buy: Farro can be found at well-stocked supermarkets, specialty or natural stores, or online.

Ingredients

3 cups (about 1 pound) diced butternut squash (1/2-inch dice)

3 tablespoons olive oil, divided

1/2 teaspoon fine salt, divided

4 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth

1 medium yellow onion (8 ounces), diced

1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 cup pearled (quick-cooking) farro

1/2 cup dry white wine

1 tablespoon unsalted butter (optional)

1/3 cup (about 1 ounce) grated parmesan cheese, divided

2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Directions

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 425 degrees.

On a large, rimmed baking sheet, toss the squash with 1 tablespoon of the oil and 1/4 teaspoon of salt. Roast for 25 to 30 minutes, or until tender and lightly browned in spots, tossing once at the midway point.

While the squash is roasting, in a small pot over medium-high heat, bring the broth to a boil. Reduce the heat to its lowest setting, cover and keep hot while you cook the farro.

In a large, heavy saucepan over medium heat, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil until shimmering. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened but not browned, about 3 minutes. Add the sage, the remaining 1/4 teaspoon of salt and the pepper and cook, stirring, for 1 minute more. Add the farro and cook, stirring frequently, until coated in the oil and toasted, about 3 minutes.

Add the wine and increase the heat to high. Cook until the wine is mostly absorbed/evaporated, about 2 minutes. Ladle enough broth into the pot to just cover the farro. Lower the heat so the broth is at a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the liquid is mostly absorbed, about 5 minutes.

Continue to add more broth, a ladle or two at a time, ensuring the liquid is gently simmering and letting it get absorbed by the farro after each addition, until the farro is tender but still has a nice chew to it and its liquid is saucy, about 35 minutes. (You may not need all of the stock.)

Stir in the squash and butter, if using, and cook until the squash is warmed through and the butter is melted, about 1 minute. Stir in all but 2 tablespoons of the cheese. Add a little more stock or water if needed to maintain a thick, saucy texture.

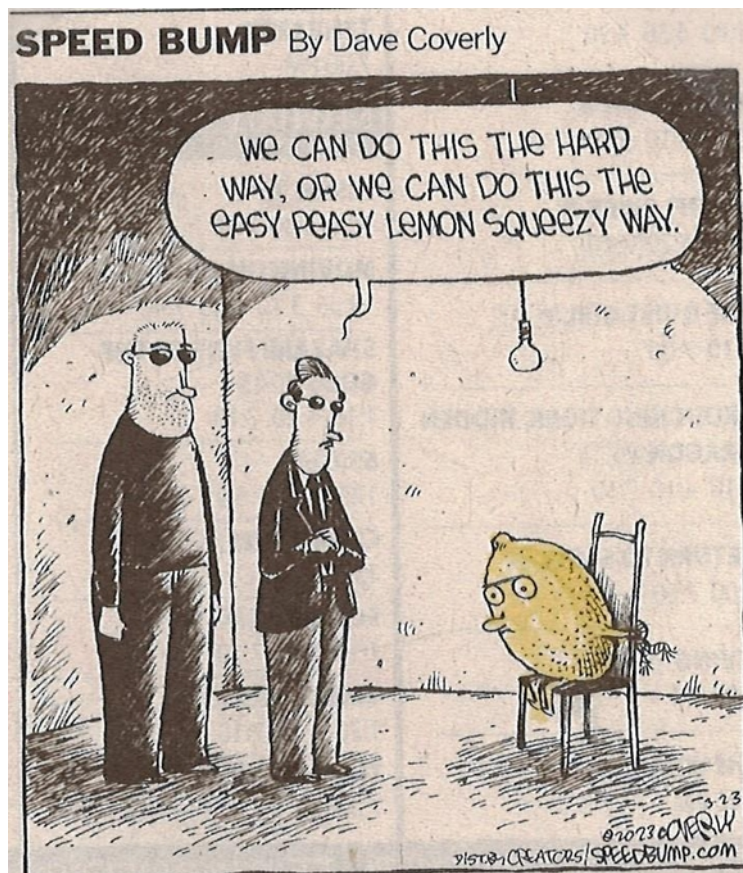
Divide among shallow bowls, garnish with the remaining cheese and parsley, and serve.

Nutrition information per serving (about 1 cup) | Calories: 386; Total Fat: 14 g; Saturated Fat: 3 g; Cholesterol: 12 mg; Sodium: 464 mg; Carbohydrates: 49 g; Dietary Fiber: 7 g; Sugar: 6 g; Protein: 12g

This analysis is an estimate based on available ingredients and this preparation. It should not substitute for a dietitian's or nutritionist's advice.

Easy Peasy, Lemon Squeezy Lemon Bars

While we patiently wait for our apricots and plums to develop, there is plenty of fresh citrus available this time of year. So, when your tree or neighbor gives you lemons, make Lemon Bars. These are healthful and delicious. They're full of protein and vitamin C. Best of all they are Easy Peasy to make!



Easy Peasy Lemon Squeezy Lemon Bars

Ingredients

Crust

2 cups (192g) King Arthur Almond Flour
6 tablespoons (74g) granulated sugar
3 tablespoons (21g) cornstarch
1/4 teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons (85g) butter, cold, diced

Filling

2 large eggs
1 cup (198g) granulated sugar
1/3 cup (74g) lemon juice
2 tablespoons (14g) cornstarch
pinch of salt
1/4 cup (46g) mini diced ginger, optional, but good

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease an 8" square pan or 9" round pan.

To make the crust: Combine the dry ingredients in a small bowl, whisking to blend. Add the cold butter, working it in with your fingers or a pastry blender until the mixture is evenly combined and crumbly.

Dump the mixture into the prepared pan, shake to distribute, and press the crust into the bottom and about 1/2" up the sides of the pan.

Bake the crust until it's light golden brown, about 8 to 10 minutes.

To make the filling: While the crust is baking, whisk together the filling ingredients.

Remove the crust from the oven, then pour the filling over the hot crust. Return the squares to the oven and bake them for 14 to 18 minutes, until the filling appears set.

Remove the squares from the oven, then allow them to cool in the pan before cutting into 2" pieces. Cover the squares, then refrigerate until ready to serve.

Interesting Links and Articles

Robert S. thought this is a worthwhile article about a young grafter on the island of Majorca.

You can read Meet the Modern Majorcan Grafter Spreading Biodiversity here:

https://modernfarmer.com/2023/03/majorcan-grafter/?utm_source=Modern+Farmer+Newsletter&utm_campaign=5f55c38d77-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_03_28_02_47&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8b23c7adc9-8f2c19ed6b-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D

Don't forget to visit the State CRFG Web site here:

[California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc. – pushing the limits and the range of fruit growing world wide \(crfg.org\)](#)

Other CRFG chapters exist throughout the state (and even in Arizona and Texas). Most have excellent Web sites where you can find great information. You can find links to other chapters on the "Chapters" page of the State CRFG Web site here:

[Chapters – California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc. \(crfg.org\)](#)