



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 21, August 2nd and 3rd, 2017

Bring on the *Beauveria bassiana*, by Stephen Pedersen

We are officially in our normal summer fog pattern here at High Ground. Early mornings have been dark and drizzly with the fog typically burning off between 9 and 11 in the morning. Not that I'm complaining. As someone who makes their living working mainly outdoors, when I hear about the triple-digit temperatures being forecast for the inland valleys, I'm thankful to be living where I am. Even after the sun appears, due to the strong onshore flow off the nearby ocean, things stay nice and comfortable here.

Many of the crops that we grow stay nice and comfortable too. It is in this narrow, cool coastal band that most of the country's lettuce, strawberry and brassica (broccoli family) crops are grown for the very reason that they can't stand the higher temperatures in inland locations.

And while the comfortable temperatures are great for both people and crops, one truly unexpected benefit of farming in this fog belt is the presence of *beauveria bassiana*, a parasitic, fungal pathogen that exists here naturally and is our greatest ally in fighting insect pests—especially aphids.

For those who grow brassica crops around here, aphids are a constant problem. It truly isn't a question of whether they will show up or not, but when and in what numbers. There are many organically approved materials that can be used on them, but most are limited in how effective they are. One of the main problems is that in order to work, these sprays have to make contact with the aphids, but they are often clustered on the underside of cup-shaped leaves and nearly impossible to reach. This is where the *beauveria* excels. When it sets in, it can wipe out whole populations of aphids across the entire farm in just a few days—regardless of how well hidden they are. And, although it is purely anecdotal, populations of cucumber beetles, another pest that we have been having major problems with, have fallen dramatically since the heavy fog cycle began as well.

Beauveria bassiana only thrives under the super humid, drizzly conditions here along the immediate coast—even inland ranches a few miles away here in our valley rarely see it. So, even though mornings may seem a little dreary and cheerless around here, I say—bring it on!

Veggie Notes, by Jason Johnson

Always rinse produce before use. Everything should be refrigerated.

Morning happens to me much the way soldiers happened to those poor beaches at Normandy. They are loud and bewildering, with many a swear word and prayer. They come from nowhere and litter my serene shores with wars I do not understand. If you are anything like me, breakfast is more a theory than anything. Something best left to academic types in far off places. Something I read about once. This week, I decided to make this lofty notion part of my war-torn routine. This is what I learned.

When it comes to this struggle, it seems that I have two allies. The egg and the blender. Like the mighty Russia and the humble England, these two implements don't necessarily play well together, but united against a common evil, are capable of great valor. Let's start with the egg. The night before, do a bit of prepping. This is war, after all. Chop some **squash**, **chard**, and **leeks**. Add some **cauliflower** and **basil** too, if you aren't saving it for anything. Combine, add to a Tupperware, and put in the fridge. I take things a step further and put a skillet on the stove-top, so I am forced to look at it while I'm pouring my coffee. I'm not proud of it, but this isn't about pride. It's about victory. The next morning, while searching for socks the way Tom Hanks searched for Matt Damon, just throw a little oil in the pan, turn it on medium-low heat, and continue searching. In a couple of minutes, or the next time you are in the kitchen, empty in the contents of your Tupperware, add a little salt, then go brush your teeth. When you come back, add 2-3 eggs, scramble, salt, pepper, socks, shoes, bye honey, I love you. When the eggs are cooked through, put it back in your Tupperware, grab a fork, and eat it in traffic.

Had Oppenheimer turned his passions towards breakfast, the blender would have been his tool of choice. I recommend freezing your **berries** this week. Just chop the greens off and throw them in a freezer bag. They last about a year this way, and make a great base for smoothies. Just add a handful of frozen **berries**, a spoonful of honey, a ¼ cup or so of rolled oats, maybe a banana and a splash of vanilla extract, then blend. The whole process takes about 4 minutes, and the oats are surprisingly filling. I know that carbohydrates get a bad rap, but this recipe layers different healthy carbs to give you sustained energy throughout your morning. Drink up. You'll need it.

Enjoy your veggies!

In The Box

Strawberries

Little Gem Lettuce

Leeks

Cauliflower OR Romanesco

Green OR Rainbow Chard

Thai Basil

Mixed Summer Squash

Mixed Cherry Tomatoes*

*All produce is certified organic.
Tomatoes are from Mariquita Farm.
All other vegetables and fruit were
grown by High Ground Organics.
Note: last minute substitutions may
be made.*

Frizzled Leeks, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

Although Frizzled Leeks sounds like a silly name, it is one that is actually used in restaurant kitchens and elsewhere. This is usually used in restaurants as a garnish for soups, salads, and things like a chop or chicken breast, but I have cooked these up for wait staff who ate them like potato chips after shift with beer or glasses of white wine and in one case, oysters. They keep well in a box with a tight fitting lid for several days, and they are great for making things look fancy. Very easy.

2 large leeks , white and palest green parts only	2-4 cups neutral flavored oil with high flash point such as grapeseed or sunflower
Salt to taste	

Cut the leeks into 2 inch lengths, then halve them lengthwise. Slice each half along the length into very thin strips. Rinse well in cold water removing all grit, using your fingers to separate the pieces and agitate. Drain and dry, blotting with a towel to remove water.

When leeks are dry, heat oil over medium in a pan so it is at least 1½ inches deep. When oil surface is shivering, add a couple pieces of leek to the oil and fry for 10-15 seconds, or until the threads are just golden. Remove from the oil and place on a paper towel to dry and cool completely. The leeks should crisp up as they dry and be crunchy and golden. Taste some. If the threads taste soggy and are not crunchy, turn the heat up to medium-high and repeat the test. If the leeks taste the least bit burnt or are browned, reduce the cooking time and/or lower the heat. Remember, every stove is a little different.

When you have the time and temperature adjusted, fry the leeks in small batches, being sure to separate the threads in the oil. Remove the leeks when ready using a spider, mesh skimmer, or slotted spoon.

Lightly season with a little salt while the threads are still warm if you wish.

When done, cool the oil a bit and then strain into a clean heat-proof vessel and save the oil for other uses such as sautéing, seasoning, or as part of a dressing. Store in the refrigerator.

When the frizzled leeks are cooled, line a tub with a tight fitting lid with a paper towel and gently transfer the threads into the box, and cover. They may be stored at room temperature for up to 3 days.

Chef's Notes: Frizzled leeks are great atop creamy or pureed soups, or on top of salads. They work well with all manner of seafood, and are a nice contrast to poached mild foods such as chicken breast filets. They add a nice contrast for salads such as French lentils with poached eggs as well.

Yield: Around 2 cups

Yellow Curry of Cauliflower, Summer Squash, and Carrots, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

This is a fast and loose interpretation of a Thai “yellow curry.” Be sure not to cook the vegetables too long or they will get mushy and unpleasant. This dish has some heat to it as written, but if you prefer it mild, simply omit the chilis. If you like your food spicy, substitute in 1/2 cup of Cilantro Chili Sauté Juice for a half cup of the stock.

1 head of cauliflower , florets cut around 1 inch across	4 carrots, peeled and diagonally sliced into ¼ inch thick slices
2-3 summer squash (enough for 2 cups cut), oblique or wedge cut into ¾ inch pieces	1 small to medium onion, peeled and cut into 3/16ths inch thick slices, cut radially along the length. Or substitute 1 leek , sliced into half rings.
1 stem lemongrass, white part only, sliced diagonally ¼ inch thick, then smacked with the flat of a sturdy knife to crush a little	2-3 ¼ inch thick slices of galangal or ginger, peeled, smacked gently with the flat of a knife or cleaver
Neutral flavored oil as needed	1-2 TBS “sweet” yellow curry powder
2-4 Thai or serrano chilies, split lengthwise (or to taste)	1 can coconut milk (whole preferred rather than “light”*)
2 cups vegetable stock	Salt and pepper as needed
½ cup loose packed Thai basil	

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it liberally. Fill a bowl with ice water in the sink. When the water is boiling, add the carrots and cook until they just lose their raw edge and start to become tender, around 5 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon or spider and dump into the ice water.

Repeat with the cauliflower. In this case, cook just until it loses its raw-ness and then dump into the ice water. Be sure the water is quite cold with plenty of ice. As soon as the vegetables have stopped cooking, remove from the water and drain thoroughly, then set on kitchen towels to dry off.

Heat a large chef’s pan or sauté pan over medium-high heat. When hot, film the bottom liberally with oil and get quite hot. Season the squash well with salt and pepper, then carefully toss into the hot oil. Cook briefly, just long enough to color the squash along the cut surfaces. Remove the squash with a slotted spoon, draining it over the hot pan, and put with the cauliflower and carrots.

Add the onions to the hot pan and toss to coat with oil. Sauté until tender. Push the onions to the outside of the pan bottom and add the curry powder, stirring it in. When fragrant, add the chilies, ginger and lemon grass, stir for 30 seconds, then add the stock. Bring to a boil, then add the coconut milk. Bring to a boil and cook until the liquid has reduced by around 50% and is thickening up a bit. Season with salt and pepper.

Lower the heat to a simmer and add the reserved vegetables to the sauce and cook to heat through. Add the ½ cup of basil, stir it in, and simmer one minute more. The sauce should be fragrant and flavorful with the herb. If not, cook a little more.

Serve hot with basmati rice or the grain or noodle of your choice.

Chef's Notes: *Light coconut milk has the coconut cream removed, so has to be reduced a lot more to get a creamy texture. If you have whole coconut milk, shake the can really well to incorporate the cream into the milk. If all you have is the light coconut milk, you may have to reduce the sauce longer to get it to thicken.

You can substitute potatoes for the squash easily-just cut the potatoes into ½ cubes and blanch until tender. Add to the ice-bath to chill and proceed with the recipe, ignoring the summer squash instructions. If you wish to add tofu, cut firm tofu into 1 inch cubes and add to the pan when your liquid starts to boil.

Serves: 4